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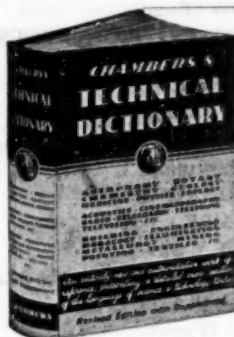
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Big Kate

L. A. G. STRONG

BIG KATE went out into the road and looked along it to the bend.

'Do ye see him?' screamed Little Kate from the cottage.

'I do not.'

Big Kate's voice was deep, more like a man's. She was as strong as a man, and stood five feet eleven. Screwing up her eyes, she peered down the road, as if concentration could call into sight the figure of the postman. But the road was empty.

Suddenly, as if doing its best to help her, the setting sun came clear of a cloud, and splashed a last wintry gleam upon bog, foothills, and mountain. The misty higher slopes of the bog leaped up and came near, pushing the foothills back. The mountain flushed dull rose. For a few seconds his majestic bulk was reared in challenge above the swimming dusk. Then the gleam blurred and left him; visibly he aged and huddled into a sullen shapelessness. A chill came from the little coppice across the road, wet, feral, mingling with the breath of the bogland.

Big Kate shivered. From habit, she shaded her eyes with her hand. The road was still empty.

A shuffling footstep sounded, and Little Kate came out to join her. 'Bad cess to him,' she pronounced. 'He was never late this way before.'

'He was, then.' Big Kate was annoyed. She knew Little Kate had come out from want of trust, to see for herself. 'Many's the time.'

'Not o' Christmas Eve.'

'Aye, o' Christmas Eve. Do ye forget, woman, the calls he has to make between this and the post-office?'

'I do not, then.' Little Kate's teeth began

to click, a sure sign that she was angry. 'I know them as well as yourself. Seventeen private houses, the presbytery, and Mooney the grocer's.'

'And every one o' them making him stay and drink a sup to bless the season and warm him on the road. Faith, it'll be a wonder if he's here at all.'

'There's only three places after this. And Joe Cassidy doesn't have e'er a letter, only his pension.' She cackled. 'There's no one'd go sendin' Christmas-cards to the likes o' him.'

Big Kate shook herself. 'Come in out o' this,' she said gruffly. 'We're doin' no good gawkin' here in the road.'

Little Kate turned after her, reluctantly. 'Ta' care he wouldn't ride past and miss us.'

'Ride past, how are ye! It'll take him all his time to compass the twist in the road.'

After a moment's hesitation, Little Kate followed into Big Kate's side of the cottage. The two old women had the same Christian names and the commonest surname in the county—there were eleven families of Coffeys in the one postal district. Local nicknames distinguished them. Big and Little Kate occupied each one half of a lonely cottage on a winding road that, after seven miles of tormented wandering over bog and foothills, came to a dead end at the foot of a long hill, amongst three or four scattered cottages a mile beyond.

THE two Kates lived in a basic enmity, varied by truces. Truces there had to be, if they were to survive at all; but, except on special occasions, each kept fiercely to her own side of the cottage. Christmas Eve was

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judged to be a special occasion: and anxiety for the postman encouraged them to inaugurate it earlier than usual.

Once inside, Little Kate didn't know what to do. Big Kate went to her fire, and made a clatter with the two big iron pots that glowed dully in the gloom. Little Kate stood, nervously picking at her dress. 'Ta' care,' she volunteered at last, 'he wouldn't have gone by an hour ago, and we not lookin' for him?'

'Talk sense, woman. Doesn't he always call?'

'It could be'—Little Kate's tongue flicked slyly at the corner of her mouth—'there was no letters for us.' For you, she meant. Little Kate had no relations: or, if she had, they ignored her.

Big Kate banged the pots. 'Doesn't me nephew always send me a parcel, and a letter with a card in it?'

'It could be,' said Little Kate, even more slyly, 'he forgot.'

'It could be yourself is jealous, the way you always are and always will be. It could be you grudge me me nephew and me parcels, though the good God knows why, and you always getting your share, little though ye deserve it. Answer me that, now!' She looked round, huge, red-faced, formidable. 'Do not I always give ye your share? Do I not, now?'

Little Kate backed away, babbling. 'Musha, what ails ye, Kate Coffey, what ails ye at all! Who's saying a word to ye!'

'Hold your whist, so, and don't be sowin' doubt in a person's mind.'

Little Kate, now near the door, fell into an aggrieved muttering. It was hard to quarrel with the woman. She insinuated her side of the question, with oblique hints and sniffs, so that she was never in a position from which she could not speedily retreat. To argue with her was like sweeping water away with a broom. She seeped back, pertinaciously. Big Kate made a furious clatter at her pots. She knew it all too well.

Sure enough, Little Kate came slowly back from the door, rubbing a hand on her dress. 'Indeed it'd be the hard thing, Kate Coffey, you not to be getting your parcel on Christmas Eve. I'd be mortal sorry for ye. Mortal sorry, I'd be.'

'Ye'd have cause. There'd be no pickings for yourself.'

'It's not that I was thinkin' of.'

'Yerrah, who cares what ye're thinkin' of! Go back to your place, or keep quiet.'

'That's no friendly way to be talkin' to a person, o' Christmas Eve.'

'Who wants to be talkin'?'

Evidently Little Kate did. She stood plucking at her dress and clicking her teeth. The series of small fidgeting noises maddened Big Kate. Just as she was on the point of exploding, Little Kate spoke. 'Is there anything I can do to be helpin' ye?'

'Yis. Go out and keep watch.'

Little Kate went, grumbling. In the doorway, she turned round. 'It's bitter cold,' she complained. Then, as Big Kate pretended not to hear, she pulled her shawl round her shoulders, and went out.

Once clear, Little Kate gave a malevolent chuckle, and scuttled into her own doorway. Leaving it open, she went to the fire, and sat huddled there, stretching her hands to the warmth, chuckling and muttering to herself. She could hear Big Kate moving about at the other side of the wall, and was ready to run to the door, should she hear her coming. Though why should she do Kate's orders? Or any person's orders? It was Kate's parcel the postman would be bringing. Let her watch for it, so.

LITTLE KATE fell into a long meditation, brooding on her wrongs—a lifetime of them. An owl hooted in the coppice. Little Kate shivered and crossed herself. Her meditations took a deeper note of self-pity. It was a terrible thing to be alone in the world, condemned to be neighbour of a graceless woman, an uncouth, hard woman the like of Big Kate. Then, warned by her instinct, she was on her feet and outside the door, peering, before Big Kate could catch her.

'Do ye see him?' asked Big Kate, but not deceived. She knew the vigil had not been kept.

'I do not, then. The two eyes are achin' in me head. It's gettin' too dark to see, anyways.'

She was right. All distances were confused now. The road was a livid grey ribbon, reared up on end in the darkness. Big Kate looked, her head forward, like a bull wondering whether to charge. 'Something's happened him,' she decided. 'We'd best go and look.' And, before Little Kate could

object, she had started off at such a pace that in a moment she was all but lost from sight.

Little Kate had to trot after her. 'A nice thing,' she complained, 'to be leaving our houses open, the way any robber—' Then she stubbed her toe on a stone, and was jerked into silence.

The road ran straight for nearly a quarter of a mile, till it came to a rocky mound. Turning sharply, it curved between a tangle of gorse and brambles to a second sharp turn, after which it climbed a short hill.

When she reached the first curve, Big Kate called out: 'Peadar! Peadar! Where are ye?'

'He's no place,' panted Little Kate angrily. 'He's in one person's house or another, swillin' an' guzzlin' an' neglectin' his work.'

'Peadar!' Big Kate strode on.

Little Kate once more lost sight of her, and shambled forward in terror. 'Kate! Kate! don't leave me!'

There was no answer to this, but another cry of 'Peadar' from yards ahead. Little Kate cursed, the spittle running down her chin. She could see nothing in the dark. On the straight road, it was fairly easy; but here, with the mounds and the rocks and the thickets—

A kind of dim moaning reached her ears. Big Kate again called 'Peadar,' and a vague voice replied. Little Kate, scrambling blindly, tripped, saved herself, recognised the shape of a boulder, rounded it, and all but ran into Big Kate, who was bending forward, and peering into the bushes. 'Peadar! Is it yourself?' she was saying.

'Who else would I be?' retorted a voice from the gloom.

'Where are yez at all?'

'Faix, I don't rightly know. By the feel of it, I'm in the brambles.'

BIG KATE stepped towards the voice, and banged into something. Little Kate heard the indrawn hiss of her breath. She'd hurted herself! Serve her glad!

'Is that me old bike ye're fallin' over?' inquired the postman's voice.

'It is.'

'Ye'd want to be wary of me old bike. It's a great warrant to take the skin off o' ye. There's more sharp corners to me old bloody bike than the pinnacles in Saint Patrick's

Cathedral. Lacerated, it has me, many's the day.'

Judging by the sounds, Big Kate had avoided the bike, and reached the brambles.

'Where are ye at all, man?'

'Strike a match,' said the voice.

'Do ye think I carry matches? Strike one yourself.'

Fumbling sounds followed, and a sigh. 'Wisha, the way I am, I can't come at meself. Use the light on the bike. It works from the back wheel, ye know.'

'Have decency, man. How would I be cockin' me leg over that yoke? And what way would I ride it, to light ye, and you where you are?'

'It's a terrible thing,' the postman said sadly, 'to be talkin' to a person has no imagination. Hol' up the bike with the one hand, and turn the pedals with the other.'

'Here,' interposed Little Kate, 'I'll help ye.'

The idea that Big Kate was failing to cope with the situation had restored her good humour. Together the two women groped for the fallen bicycle. Their eyes were getting used to the darkness, but even so they could not see the postman. There was a difficulty about turning the pedals, because that meant lifting the back wheel clear of the ground, and their first efforts merely lit up the ground in front of their feet. Not till Big Kate raised the bike clear of the ground, and Little Kate, bending forward, jerkily turned the pedals—for all the world as if she was mangling, as she afterwards said—were they able to direct a weak unsteady beam on the postman.

'Musha, man!'

He was sitting up, his legs wide apart, in the midst of a blackberry bush. The brambles were twined around him: his forehead and hands were all over blood from scratches. His postbag had fallen off, and lay open, with a few letters and parcels scattered around.

'I came off,' he announced superfluously, 'at the twist in the road.'

Little Kate, bent double and turning the handle, uttered an indignant croak. 'Where's our letters, where's our letters, ye drunken blaggard ye?'

'Help yerself,' the postman told her, with a gesture that almost overbalanced him.

Forgetting her duty, Little Kate made a dart towards the bag—and the darkness closed over them like black water.

'Wait,' Big Kate said gruffly. 'I have the

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way of it now.' Somehow, she propped up the bike with one hand, and vigorously turned the pedals with the other. A much brighter light sprang out: but Little Kate was too intent upon the letters to resent it. She had to move aside, so that her shadow was off the bag.

'Is my parcel in it?' Big Kate's words came stertorously. It was hard work, holding up the bike and turning the pedals.

'Wait now,' replied Little Kate. 'O'Kelly—Brannigan—James Coffey, bad cess to him—Kate Coffey! It is! Safe and sound!'

'There now,' the postman cried happily from the far edge of the light. 'What did I tell ye?'

'Is there anything more?' asked Big Kate.

Little Kate was ferreting about.

'Put them back when ye're done,' the postman enjoined her.

'A letter. A Christmas-card. And—by the holies—one for me! A card for me!'

'How do you know it's for you?'

'How do I know, when it's from Mrs McCann, that was lodging above at Roskelly! Her as I cleaned for in the month o' September. How do I know it's for me!'

'Well,' Big Kate retorted, with grim good-humour, 'if that's all that's in it, put the rest back, and close the bag, and give me a hand with this hero.'

LITTLE KATE did as she was told. 'I can't close the bag. The strap's broke.'

'It's been broke this twelvemonth,' explained the postman.

'Think shame!' Little Kate scolded him. Then: 'How will we see what we're doin', if the two of us raises him?'

'Take this, so.' Grumbling, Little Kate took it. 'Keep it steady.—Now, can ye stand at all?'

'I can't say till I try,' the postman replied.

'Me left leg is trapped.'

'Show us a light, woman, can't ye?' roared Big Kate.

Little Kate, unequal to the job of holding the bike and turning the pedals, was sending weak and wobbly shafts all over the place. 'I'm doin'—the best—I can.'

'Hol' up!' Big Kate grasped the postman under the arms, and pulled him to his feet. There was a tearing sound, a surprised hiccup, and he stood embracing her tightly.

'Leave go of me, ye big gomm.'

'And fall down, is it? Lead me out o' this, woman. Amn't I dependin' on ye?'

Somehow Big Kate got him out into the road. 'We'll bring him above to the cottage. Wheel the bike, you. Have ye his bag?'

'I have not.'

'Get it, so.'

As long as he kept upright, the postman could walk. He clung to Big Kate with what she felt to be an unnecessary fervour, but she steered him without difficulty to the cottage, Little Kate pushing the bicycle behind them, grumbling to herself with a small bubbling sound, like an indignant brook.

'Now let's have a look at ye, man.'

He was the worse for wear, bleeding from a dozen scratches, and with a six-inch tear in the left leg of his trousers, but he beamed complacently on the two women. Clicking her tongue, Big Kate dipped a rag in water and scrubbed the blood off him with a vigour that brought the first sound of protest from him. 'Will ye take a sup?' she invited him.

'And I with a cargo o' varied liquor would sink a barge. Don't ask me, for the love o' God, when I've me round to finish.'

'Talk sense, man. How will ye finish your round, and you the way ye are!'

'Bear me to the brow o' the hill,' he assured her, 'set me on me bike, give me a hoosh off, and th'ould bike'll carry me down the slope. Sure, the front wheel knows the road.'

'Ye'll be off again at the butt o' the hill.'

'What matter. They'll be waitin' on me.'

Together the two women led him up the road to the top of the long decline. They held the bike steady while he mounted. They gave him a shove.

'Hurroo!' shouted the postman—and in a moment all they could see was the light on the road in front of him. It wobbled wildly, then became steady, rushed away from them, and was lost. 'Hurroo!' came back faintly. Then the stillness flowed in, from all sides, with the cold wet breath of the night—and the two women turned back to their cottage.

Little Kate hobbled along, chattering. The Christmas-card sent to her by the lady she had looked after in the summer had raised her spirits. She felt regal, warm, and gracious. There was not a spark of bitterness left in her; and when Big Kate bade her come in, and began to open the parcel, she was ready to receive her share without resentment, as one from a higher sphere, conferring a favour by accepting her neighbour's gift.

Crackers

W. MASON-OWEN

ALTHOUGH many people confuse Christmas crackers with Chinese crackers, thinking them to be one and the same, the former owe their origin to an enterprising young Englishman who invented them just over a hundred years ago.

Tom Smith worked hard as an apprentice confectioner, often putting in more than twelve hours a day at his job. But his toil was eventually rewarded, for his craftsmanship soon elevated him to the position of master-baker. After years of hard saving he was able to start up his own business, making and selling all kinds of cakes and confectionery, but specialising in wedding-cakes and the ornaments—bows, bells, figures, and charms—with which they were decorated.

A go-ahead businessman, Smith was always on the lookout for original ideas of improving the limited range of cake ornaments and sweets, and his search for new notions took him on occasional trips to the Continent. On one of these short trips to France, in 1847, he noticed that a certain Paris confectioner was selling sweets wrapped in tissue-paper and called them 'bonbons'—an idea which ultimately led Smith to the invention of the cracker.

On his return to London, Smith immediately purchased rolls of multicoloured tissue-paper, a hundredweight of sugared almonds, and set his small staff to work wrapping the sweets in readiness for the Christmas season. England gave the first bonbons a mixed reception, buying up all available stocks during the festive season, but completely boycotting the sweets as soon as Christmas was over.

This made Tom Smith realise that bonbons were only a seasonal demand; he also realised that novelty was essential if his sales-charts were to soar as he planned. So the following year he included little mottoes—'kiss mottoes' as they were then termed—with the sweet in

his gaily-coloured wrapper. He was not content to rest on his laurels, however, and was still on the lookout for improvements. He put fresh life and soul into his bonbons for Christmas 1850 by including a toy, puzzle, charm, or piece of inexpensive jewellery, in addition to the motto and sweet.

ONE winter night in 1858, Tom Smith, his wife, and their three sons were sitting by a blazing log-fire, and every time this was replenished the log crackled and popped as it caught alight. For a time Smith took no notice of this, just the normal way of all good logs, but as each crackle and bang was greeted by loud cheers from each of the youngsters, the nucleus of an idea took shape in his imagination. 'Why not a "cracking bonbon" specially for the children at Christmas?' he mused. Little did he realise that this simple thought was the beginning of two years' hard work.

To turn his idea into reality, he toiled unceasingly. His aim was an explosion that was both audible and harmless, and only by the hard road of repeated trial and error did Tom Smith evolve these 'Bangs of Expectation,' as this very English novelty was then called. Every setback he encountered made him try all the harder, until eventually he hit upon the idea of the friction-strip of saltpetre, which caused a minute explosion when the paper wrapper was pulled. Such was the birth, in 1860, of the Christmas cracker as we know it to-day.

The crackers were welcomed with wild enthusiasm and made Tom Smith the uncrowned, yet undisputed, 'Cracker King.' Big orders began pouring in just after Christmas for next season's supplies, completely swamping the tiny wooden workshop. When the demand became too large for his limited

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space, Smith moved to a new factory, where increasing orders kept hundreds busy throughout the whole year.

TOM SMITH died six years later at the early age of 45, but two of his sons headed the business until they, too, died—Walter in 1923, Tom junior in 1928. Although both played an active part in the cracker industry, it was perhaps Walter who took the most interesting step forward when he introduced the topical touch into Christmas crackers. His army of professional artists and authors kept abreast of topical events, and any new fads or fancies quickly found their way to the box illustrations or to the contents of the crackers themselves. In fact, a volume could be written on the theme of topical crackers, so vast and varied were the subjects they touched on.

There were, for instance, crackers which poked fun at Darwin's theory; crackers which commemorated the daring voyages of Scott, Nansen, and others; there were miniature Gatling-gun crackers; crackers which sought to unify the peoples of Britain and America, which contained full-sized uniforms of Uncle Sam, John Bull, or Britannia.

'Press' crackers, too, were popular and were described as the 'greatest novelty of "The Times."' Their contents ranged from outside headdresses, typifying the then current magazines and daily papers, to Peter Pan copies of popular periodicals; from tiny scraps of paper containing sentimental greetings from the agony columns to full-scale paper costumes complete with splashes of printer's ink, grotesque headlines, and festive paragraphs.

In fact, everything that happened during the year got its share of publicity in the topical cracker. The advent of the motor-car, the Boer war, the cinema, the aeroplane, the telephone, roller-skating, suffragettes, even Charlie Chaplin's moustache, all helped to make the party go with a bang. But, of course, the most important theme of all was the evergreen 'Boy meets Girl.' No matter what topical tag was behind the illustration on the box-lid, or the toys, games, or masks inside the crackers, 'Love's Message' was always to be found—by those who shyly sought it.

In these 'days of enlightenment' we may, perhaps scoff at those love mottoes. But

fifty or sixty years ago, lovesick spinsters attached a great deal of importance to the coyly-uttered motto. Indeed, until destroyed by German bombs in 1941, Tom Smith's files contained many hundreds of letters which told of a romance that had matured after reading one of the firm's mottoes.

TO-DAY, the cracker industry turns out more than fifty million crackers, ranging in size from three inches to several feet. The work begins in January for the following Christmas, and there's more in crackers than meets the eye—if I may be pardoned the joke. Their manufacture has developed into a fine art, and every box of crackers undergoes a rigid test before it is despatched.

The complete box—crackers and all—is made to a definite plan, later amended where necessary, then checked and finally approved. Apart from the cheapest brands, which are machine-made, crackers are still put together by hand, just as they were in 1850. Each item is tackled separately. Artists work out the illustrations for the box-lids, experts seek a harmonising colour scheme, while the actual cracker-makers themselves decide on the multicoloured covers, labels, mottoes, and novelties of the finished product.

After the crepe paper is cut and crimped, it is glued to a semi-stiff white lining, which, when dry, is rolled round a metal tube. The 'crack' and riddle are then inserted, and one end of the paper is secured by winding linen thread tightly round it. The cap, game, or toy are put in at the open end before this is similarly tied, and then, lastly, the decoration is stuck on.

An experienced worker can turn out anything up to five hundred crackers a day, but it takes almost eighteen months to master the craft. Many women make crackers at home in their spare time, but the majority are made in a modern factory, where everything is done to help the worker achieve her target of a cracker a minute.

Seventy different articles are required to complete one boxful of crackers—pictures for the box-lid, the semi-stiff white lining, the crepe and silver-paper coverings, the cardboard parts, mottoes, caps, novelties, artificial frost, and some sixty other items.

Crackers range in price from a few pence to almost a pound each, their value being governed by the extent of the 'frillings' and

CELEBRATING THE ESCALADE

the cost of the hidden gift. One of the most expensive crackers produced last year cost ten guineas, and was six feet in length. What must certainly have been the biggest cracker ever made, however, was manufactured in this country some years ago for an American millionaire. It was a monster of some thirty feet, and the novelty inside was a complete winding-staircase, with on each of the stairs a small, but expensive, gift. This festive

novelty cost the American some £6000! But for most of us an ordinary, brightly turned out cracker, costing no more than a few pence, will suffice, providing it contains some hidden mystery for us to find after we have donned the paper-hat which we wear with a self-conscious grin.

No! Christmas would not be a Christmas without the gaily-coloured cracker which makes children of us all.

Celebrating the Escalade

A Little-known Genevese Anniversary

HENRY COMPTON

HOW many of us have heard of the Escalade of 1602? Even the textbooks of European History mention it only in passing, if at all. To the citizens of Geneva, however, it is as familiar as the happenings of 55 B.C. and A.D. 1066 are to us. It was on the night of December 11th-12th, 1602, that Duke Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy attempted to capture the proud Protestant city-state by sending an armed force to scale the ramparts—and was repulsed with the loss of two hundred men.

The Escalade was the last exciting chapter in the three-centuries-long struggle between Geneva and the ambitious rulers of Savoy (ancestors of the royal house of Italy), and the Genevese have never forgotten it. But I, a mere visitor, heard the oft-repeated tale only when I inquired why the Genevese confectioners' shop-windows became filled at the beginning of December with model cauldrons of chocolate. 'The latest novelty, I suppose,' I said to André, my Genevese host, as we walked along the Rue du Rhône. '*Au contraire*,' he replied, 'they're the cauldrons of La Mère Royaume.'

Mère Royaume, explained André, was the

heroine of the Escalade. The citizens had been warned in the nick of time of the approach of their enemies, but nevertheless the attack achieved partial surprise and a small party entered one quarter of the town. In the ensuing confusion it was Mère Royaume's resourcefulness, if tradition is to be believed, which rallied the defenders. She had been making soup for early-morning workers in her upper-storey kitchen, and, finding the Duke of Savoy's soldiers beneath her window, she promptly poured her scalding mixture over them, and hurled the iron cauldron after it, thereby killing one of the invaders.

Before the assault, the Savoyards had been blessed by one Father Hume, a Scottish Jesuit, who had assured them that their scaling-ladders were in reality ladders to heaven. But the Duke's men did not seem to have much stomach for the fight. Those who reached the streets were disposed of in hand-to-hand fighting, and the remainder withdrew.

ANDRÉ had warmed to the telling of his tale. 'You must come to our Escalade

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party,' he urged. And so I found myself on December 12th in one of those Genevese *salons* which, despite their French upholstery, are somehow remarkably English in atmosphere. But André's family had forgotten the Genevese habit of speaking French soberly and sedately, as though it were English. There was unwonted animation in the talk, there were games, and then someone handed me a copy of the Escalade songs—a huge sheet of paper, with a coloured border depicting the memorable event.

'Gare, Gare, Savoyards!' we sang. To verse after verse of a jaunty popular melody the assembled company recited in ample detail the history of the Escalade, while I tried to read sense and rhythm into the 17th-century French dialect of the song. There followed a hymn of defiance and jubilation, with a tune astonishingly like 'God Save the King,' and then a magnificent chocolate cauldron was placed on the floor in the middle of the room.

We gathered round. Six-year-old Madeleine, the youngest daughter of the house, advanced towards the cauldron, grasping her father's walking-stick. 'Thus,' she declared, 'may all the enemies of Geneva perish!' Father's stick descended fair and square on the cauldron. Its chocolate sides, and the sweetmeats within, were scattered in all directions. We all scrambled after the pieces, and, making sure that the children had more than their fair share, we contentedly munched our booty.

'YOU will come to see the procession, of course,' said André, handing me a piece of cauldron. The procession was clearly something that no self-respecting citizen

would miss. We went out into the wintry boulevard and soon found ourselves among the crowd in the Place St Pierre, facing the west front of Calvin's Cathedral.

At length the leaders of the procession came into view. They were gaily-costumed horsemen, bearing lighted torches, and after them came pikemen, and men-at-arms, and what I took to be civic dignitaries, wearing Elizabethan ruffs. 'Their costumes all date from the Escalade period,' André told me, 'and they take them every year from the Museum for this procession.'

The horsemen set fire with their torches to a huge pile of twigs and branches in the centre of the Place. Soon the bonfire was burning fiercely, and the sea of faces, bounded by the Cathedral portico and the many-storeyed houses, was suffused with a red glow by the reflected light. Somewhere, a few voices began a hymn. It was a metrical version of the 124th Psalm, sung every year on the anniversary of the Escalade ever since the days of Beza, the Reformer. 'Had not the Lord been on our side.' As the crowd took up the tune, I recognised a melody which Gustav Holst has made familiar in England in an anthem, with words by Clifford Bax.

Geneva can pride itself on having given much to the world at large, but, of all the peaceful achievements of their forebears, nothing is dearer to the hearts of the Genevese than the repulse of that minor military operation—the Escalade. Like our own abortive Gunpowder Plot, the Escalade has given rise to annual festivities for over three centuries. Happy were the days when invasion or treason could be so speedily countered, and when the ordinary citizen could rejoice so simply and wholeheartedly in the overthrow of his enemies!

The Passing

*Oh the passing, passing slowly,
Oh the powers that slip away,
Life not yet departed wholly,
Mind and memory astray.*

*Now come childhood's old reliance,
Childhood's simple faith again,
Gone the vanities of science,
Only inner truths remain.*

*As in darkness and unknowing
Spirit met its earthly dawn,
So when spirit now is going
Light of senses is withdrawn.*

*Fading slowly, fading wholly,
Now remains no more than breath,
Now a ceasing, a releasing,
Spirit gone, and body's death.*

H. M. MARGOLIOUTH.

Any Prize on the Stand

ROGER WOOLNOUGH

THE sea was a bright, glittering yellow under the rays of the two-o'clock sun. Most of the people on the beach were retiring beneath the shade of their Sunday newspapers, preparing for an hour's doze to aid the digestion of their sandwiches. Only a few enthusiasts were left to swim; on the beach only the children were moving, building sand-castles with happy but, for the most part, inexperienced hands. Paddling was at a minimum.

'It isn't half hot, George,' said Iris.

'I know,' said her fiancé, loosening another button on his shirt. 'Want another ice?'

'Not after that beetroot.'

George lay back, his hands behind his head and his eyes squinting in the strong sunlight. 'We should have got a place by the wall,' he said. 'Plenty of shade there. Look at all those people—sitting pretty now.'

'They'll get it later,' said Iris.

'Yes, when the heat of the sun's finished.'

'Anyway, we came to be at the seaside. You can lean against any old wall at home.'

George sighed. He knew that they should move somewhere cooler. He looked around the crowded beach, but there was no shade apart from that afforded by the wall. 'What about the fun fair?' he asked.

'What about it?' said Iris.

'Be cooler there. Go on the big-wheel and get a bit of breeze. Go on the roundabout and get the air through us.'

Iris was tempted. 'We'll lose our place on the beach,' she warned him.

'Better than turning into a couple of greas-spots,' George replied, and she agreed.

They started packing their things into a bag, their remaining sandwiches and pieces of cake wrapped in greaseproof paper, and the lettuce in damp muslin. Iris put her novel from the twopenny lending-library on

top of all, and they started to pick their way through the sprawling mass of dads and mums who were doing their best to tan.

THE fun fair lay about two hundred yards along the front, covering a few acres and having all the spectacular pieces of equipment that good fun fairs have. There was the big-wheel, and the octopus. There was an old-fashioned roundabout, that had a notice on it saying 'Built in 1870 and still going strong,' and there was a modern roundabout, called 'The Swish-U-Round,' on which racing-cars and motor-bikes had been substituted for horses, chickens, and dragons. There was a switchback, and there were bumper-cars, and situated between all these were the little stalls, which, though not very sensational, at least drew their customers and paid their rent. There was hoop-la, and darts, and the coconut-shies. There was a punch-ball, and one or two stalls for rolling the penny, which had notices round them saying things like 'Great Sport,' 'Game of Skill,' and 'Don't Cheat.'

At this hour of the day the fairground was not doing a roaring business. Some of the stallholders were not prosperous enough to employ an assistant to deputise for them while they had their lunch, and several of the sideshows were deserted in consequence. The octopus and the switchback were out of action at the moment, too. Few people liked that sort of thrill at two o'clock in the afternoon.

George and Iris walked around the fair for a few minutes. It was certainly cooler there, away from the direct rays of the sun and the jamming mass of hot, half-undressed people.

'What about the big-wheel?' asked George.

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'All right,' Iris answered, and they crossed to the wire enclosure that housed the platform of the big-wheel, and the spluttering engine that drove it. A perspiring young man in dirty khaki trousers and a vest took their money, and they stepped into a compartment. There were only three other couples on the wheel, and after a few minutes the young man gave a shrug and started the wheel on its journey.

'Bit cooler,' said George, as they rose above the ground.

'Breath of air,' Iris agreed, and she looked over the sea, and along the crowded, colourful beach. 'Like flies,' she commented.

George nodded at the aptness of her remark. He was looking down into the fairground, wondering at the lack of custom, the empty spaces between the sideshows. 'They're not doing much,' he remarked.

'I expect they make their money in the evenings,' suggested Iris. 'I expect that's it. People don't sit on the beach after it gets dark. And it must look pretty when it's all lit up.'

George said: 'Give me a regular job, though. Think of the winter.'

'Oh, well, of course,' Iris conceded, 'in the winter. I wouldn't marry you if you were one of *them*.'

George laughed, as though he found it funny that she thought she could resist him, under any circumstances. They had started on their downward journey.

'Ooh, look over there, George. There's a crowd. In that corner.'

'Someone's attracting the people,' said George. 'We'll have a look at that.'

The big-wheel came to a rest. The young man was still perspiring, mopping his brow and breathing heavily. He looked round for the next set of customers. Nobody was waiting. 'Want to go round again?' he asked George and Iris hopefully.

'No, thanks,' Iris answered. 'We're lovely and cool now.'

The young man mopped his brow again.

'Ought to go round yourself, mate,' advised George.

'Someone's got to work it,' replied the young man regretfully, and sat down to wait for the next customer.

had seen the crowd. As they drew nearer they heard a man talking over a loudspeaker, and turning a corner they came upon the crowd. They were grouped around a fairly large stall, in the middle of which were arranged prizes of varying type but doubtful value. The man who was speaking stood at the side of the prizes, on a small platform. He held a hand microphone, into which he was whispering various confidences.

'Just a few more seconds, ladies and gentlemen,' the microphone barker said, 'just a few more seconds before we begin. Just another chance for the few more tickets left, just a few more seconds.' The barker rambled on, in the same toneless, disinterested voice that he had been using since March and would go on using until October, but with a deceptive, practised skill that either drew in the spectators trembling on the brink or drove them away altogether, to the rifle-range, or the ghost-train, or the wall of death.

It was the Great Airways Game. Above the prizes was a horizontal propeller, on each end of which was a big silver aeroplane. Above this was a large panel bearing about two dozen names of various film-stars. The barker pressed a switch, and the propeller would rotate, the aeroplanes circling over the prizes, while the names lit up successively, faster and faster. Then the aeroplanes would slow down, and the light finally rest at one name. The person with that name on his or her ticket won a prize. It was a simple game; the aeroplanes were only there to draw attention.

The tickets were all sold, and the game started. The names lit up, one after the other. The excitement and anticipation only lasted a few minutes. Then the barker began speaking again. 'Any prize on the stand,' he said, as the light slowed down. 'Any prize on the stand to the lucky winner.' The light flickered, jumped a further place, and came to rest. 'Mae West,' intimated the barker; 'Mae West. The person with the Mae West ticket, please. Any prize on the stand.'

A little man in a corner held out a ticket, and a white-coated attendant scrutinised it carefully. Then he handed it to the barker. 'The gentleman in the corner,' announced the barker. 'Any prize on the stand, sir. Any prize on the stand.'

The winner turned to a woman at his side, and then said: 'The chocolates.'

The barker looked as delighted as the

GEORGE and Iris made immediately for the corner of the fairground where they

ANY PRIZE ON THE STAND

winner. 'And the gentleman chooses the lovely one-pound box of chocolates. He has the choice of any prize you can see on the stand, ladies and gentlemen, and he chooses the lovely one-pound box of chocolates.'

An attendant handed the chocolates to the winner. George looked at Iris. 'Go on,' Iris urged, 'get a ticket, George. Go on.'

George felt in his pocket for a shilling. 'Game of chance, of course,' he said, with a devil-may-care, man-of-the-world gesture.

They pushed their way to the front. The microphone barker had started his routine again. 'Take your tickets now, ladies and gentlemen, for the Great Airways Game. Win a prize to take home. Any prize on the stand. Take your tickets now.'

The attendants were circulating with the tickets. George bought one.

'Who've we got?' asked Iris.

'Clark Gable,' George told her, holding the ticket tightly in his hand.

'Let's have a look,' Iris requested.

George handed the ticket to her. 'Don't lose it,' he counselled. She looked at it in wonder.

'WHAT d'you want if we win?' George inquired.

Iris cast an eye over the prizes. There was imitation cut-glass, most of it coloured, and there were china crinoline ladies. There was a set of half-a-dozen wine-glasses, and in a very prominent position there was a large, white, fluffy toy rabbit. It stood about two feet high, and had a pink bow round its neck. Iris looked at it and smiled. 'I'd like the rabbit.'

'What for?' asked George derisively. 'What do you want a toy rabbit for?'

'What's wrong with it?' said Iris, with some indignation. 'What would you have? A hundred fags, I suppose.'

'Better than a rabbit,' said George, with equal indignation. 'At least fags are useful.'

'Useful!' replied Iris. 'They'd be gone in a couple of days. And you'd hand them all round your friends, just to show off what you'd won. A thing like a toy rabbit you can keep—a sort of souvenir.'

'Useless sentiment.'

'Better than smoking yourself to death, any day.'

George collected his thoughts. He looked

over the prizes to try and find something to pick on as a substitute to cigarettes. He didn't want a tiff to develop. 'No, seriously,' he announced a few minutes later, 'seriously, I'd have that tea-service.'

'What for?'

George was taken aback at this. He hadn't reckoned with the obstinacy of Iris's character. An offer of the crown jewels wouldn't have tempted her from the rabbit now. 'Handy when we're married,' George stated.

Iris shrugged. 'Just like you,' she retorted. 'No sentiment. I'd rather have the rabbit.'

George's reply was cut short by the excitement of the game. Iris momentarily forgot their differences, and clutched his sleeve. 'Look! Look!' she cried. 'Look! Clark Gable. It's stopping at Clark Gable.'

But the light flickered on to a second, a third, a fourth place, finally coming to rest on another name. Iris was consoled by the fact that they couldn't expect to win first time.

Of course they bought another ticket. And another, and another, until George had to change his second ten-shilling note, and Iris was glad they had return-tickets for the train. George was secretly glad that they kept losing; he knew that the difference in their choice of prize would only lead to trouble. The argument had been sustained through each game, and by now George was as vehement about his tea-service as Iris was about her rabbit.

'I don't know where you'd put a rabbit, anyway,' he said as the twelfth game started.

'On the mantelpiece,' snapped Iris.

'It would fall off. The mantelpiece isn't wide enough. It would fall off.'

'On the top of the wardrobe, then.'

'Get dusty up there,' he returned, but before she could reply the game finished. George threw the ticket on the ground. 'Come on, let's go and have some tea. I'm fed up with this.'

THEY walked along the front, looking for a café that was not too crowded. They were very quiet, and for a few minutes they were both deep in thought; but the breeze that was now coming in from the sea acted as an antidote to their irritability, and they began to talk about something else, something that had nothing to do with fairgrounds, and prizes, and toy rabbits.

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'What about this one, then?' George asked as they came to a café. Iris nodded, and they went in. They seemed to have struck a slack period, for they sat at a table straight-away. The freshly-found amicability continued throughout the meal, and they chatted easily of this and that. It was as they were finishing their second cup of tea that the little girl came in, carrying a toy white rabbit that was the replica of the one offered as a prize. They both looked straight at it.

'Just like a kid,' George said at once, 'having a white rabbit.' He kicked himself. 'Fool!' he thought. 'You fool! Why can't you leave well alone?'

But the damaging words were spoken, and Iris reopened her attack with fresh vigour. 'You!' she cried. 'You'd have a lot of cups and saucers, so's you could invite your cronies in when the pubs turned you out.'

George coloured. 'I'm thinking about a home.'

'Fine home it would be, with your cronies drinking tea all the time.'

'Better than than someone who cared about nothing but toy rabbits all day long. Rabbits, rabbits, rabbits.'

He had returned the shot wildly, but it was the decisive one in the battle. Iris stood up, her eyes large and staring. She tried to say something, but could only give a little cough. Then she left the café with a half-hearted, limping little run.

George sat still for a few minutes. A little woman with a sharp nose, who was at the next table, said: 'What's wrong with her?'

'She feels sick,' he replied, getting up to pay the bill. 'And so do I.'

GEORGE walked along the front, his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the ground. It was funny how things happened—just like that. Difficult to believe in anything when things can happen—just like that. And a toy rabbit—as though it really mattered. And if only he'd . . .

The fair people had decided that it was dark enough to switch on the fairy-lights, and George walked through a much more

crowded fairground. The microphone barker was still telling of the pleasures of the Great Airways Game, and without knowing it George was drawn to the side of the stand. Automatically he bought a ticket and watched the lights flicker from name to name. Slowly they came to rest.

'Greta Garbo,' called the barker. 'The lady or gentleman with the Greta Garbo ticket, please. Any prize on the stand to the lady or gentleman with the Greta Garbo ticket.'

The attendants were going around the crowd. George looked at his ticket. Yes, he had Greta Garbo. He had the winning ticket. He held it up, and immediately an attendant was at his side.

'Greta Garbo,' George told the barker, and the barker took the ticket and said: 'Any prize on the stand, sir. The gentleman on the left has the winning ticket, ladies and gentleman. Any prize on the stand, sir.'

The attendant looked at George. George was staring hard at the tea-service. He gripped the side of the stall very tightly. He knew he had no choice. 'Gimme the rabbit,' he said.

'And the gentleman had the choice of any prize on the stand, ladies and gentlemen,' announced the barker, 'and he has chosen the fluffy white rabbit that would delight and surprise any infant.'

The white-coated attendant took the rabbit from the middle of the stand, and, showing no emotion, either of pleasure or beneficence, handed it to George. It was a routine job; they all liked white rabbits. The barker wetted his lips and thought: 'Big draw, them rabbits. Must order another dozen.' Then he took up his microphone and began again: 'Any prize on the stand, ladies and gentlemen, such as the fluffy white rabbit which the gentleman has just won. Only one shilling, and any prize on the stand. Take your tickets now, only a few seconds, only a few more tickets left. Any prize on the stand.'

George turned his back on them all, and, tucking the toy rabbit firmly under his arm, went to look for Iris.

Ghost of the Icefloes

The Polar Bear at Home

FRANK ILLINGWORTH

THREE expeditions are in the Arctic and from their joint efforts will come the first full-length film of the polar bear's home-life. A member of the Danish expedition in Peary Land, in the extreme north of Greenland, 600 miles from the North Pole, has made the first photographic record of a polar bear stalking a seal, with a white paw held over the only conspicuous part of its body—the black tip of its nose! The 900-pound polar bear weighs at birth little more than a rabbit or a small dog—although it tilts the scales at anything up to 600 pounds at eight months, and a Norwegian cameraman in Spitsbergen has recently made the first motion-picture of the she-bear, with her tiny cubs in her great woolly arms. Then from Alaska comes the news that an American expedition is to spend this winter there making the first moving-picture of the bachelor he-bear padding silently through the gloom of the polar night.

The very remoteness of the polar bear's domain renders the animal difficult to study on an all-the-year-round basis. Not only is its habitat far beyond the frontiers of civilisation, but it lives largely among *moving* sea-ice, and, except for the old he-bear, the creature spends one-third of its life hibernating in a bed of snow.

With the first blizzards of autumn, the polar bear scoops a hollow in a snow-bank and allows the swirling particles to cover his great body. His breath percolates through the drifted snow and behind this barrier he dozes for four full months, and in the more northerly regions longer. He-bear and she-bear spend the winter in separate quarters, the she-bear going into hibernation ahead of her mate, in preparation for the cubs' arrival in October-November.

THE massive, lumbering giant of the ice-packs begins life as a very white ball of fluff. All winter the she-bear holds her tiny offspring in her mighty arms, drowsily licking and nursing the babies, soothing with sibilant whimperings while her hot breath funnels through the blowhole which that breath itself makes in the roof above her bullet-shaped head. She eats nothing from October until springtime, except perhaps the lichen and grass growing within the walls of her den. During this period she lives on her blubber, which is also the source of the milk necessary to the cubs—twins and, less frequently, triplets. Nature seems to have made the cubs exceedingly small at birth so that they will require little milk, thus sparing their mother from drawing heavily on her coat of fat.

The he-bear's matrimonial responsibilities are negligible. He takes no part in building his mate's den, and he spends the winter far from family trials, in a den of his own. At the first sign of danger he bursts from his hollow and makes off into the polar night. But normally he remains buried from November until February, and in the more northerly districts until March, sometimes spending his last few days of hibernation in the sun, with one wall of his den broken open. A few gnarled old nomads pass the winter padding like wraiths through the blizzards in search of seals, but however the males spend the winter—in hibernation or hunting—they show no interest in the she-bear or her cubs.

The she-bear has the exclusive care and training of her young. She it is who teaches them to hunt, who leads them to safety when the killer-whale bumps up against the bottom of the ice in the hope of pitching the bears

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into the water, and it is she who snarls defiance when her young are threatened by man or husky. Bears can be killed by erecting a rifle pointing at a lump of blubber. The she-bear who comes upon such a contraption pushes her cubs aside while she examines the rifle, the string that connects it to the blubber, and the blubber itself.

Summer sees the cubs, two roly-poly pure-white teddy-bears, trotting across the floes between their mother's huge forepaws. Few animals are more attractive than the polar bear cub, for his expression is of innocence, his gait slightly comical, and his mannerisms are captivating. Could there be a more engaging sight than that of a cub, tired from swimming, catching hold of mother's tail for a tow!

But the bear cub quickly grows out of baby ways. The kitten-sized cub of October or November is by the following August a magnificent beast weighing some 400 pounds. As he gets older his hair becomes longer and yellowish, and then shorter and whiter, until, with full stature, his coat is something between the extremes in colour and length of what one might call early cubhood and adolescence. The cubs hibernate with their mother for the first two winters.

THE polar bear shows little signs of hunger following hibernation. There are records of a bear emerging from four months of fasting to sniff at a dead seal and turn away. Apparently hunger comes upon the animal only after it has had some exercise.

Marked patience is displayed in the hunting of seals, the bear being prepared to spend all day crouched at the edge of a seal's blowhole, motionless, his beady eyes peering into the black water, in the knowledge that sooner or later the quarry will come up for air. The meticulous do not accept the suggestion that the arctic bear knows he suffers from halitosis and that to prevent the quarry from detecting the vapour in his scented breath he buries his nose in the snow at the edge of the blowhole; but a Norwegian trapper in Spitsbergen told me that the polar bear does indeed do just this. Likewise, and now apparently, as has been indicated above, with photographic support, some trappers insist that when stalking a seal the ice bear places a paw over the only part of his body clearly visible against the white background—the black tip

of his nose! His immense bulk blending into the polar background, the bear holds his head low against the ice, and, stumpy tail twitching with impatience, toboggans forward until the final rush.

The bear may sometimes use his paws as clubs, shattering the seal's skull. There are accounts of the animal picking up a lump of ice and smashing a seal or a walrus over the head. Whatever the truth in these tales, the bear's teeth are his main weapon: the development of the jaw-muscles proves this. One bite is enough to crush the seal's head or cripple its supple body.

Yet, the seal is wary; and, when defeated, the bear may give an exhibition of tantrums. I witnessed an episode of the kind in Ice Fjord, Spitsbergen, where seals are found in fair numbers. For some time we watched a bear stalking a seal close inshore, where sea-ice met the rocks. He took immense pains to advance unseen, but this was not to be his successful day, for, as he launched the final, incredibly swift rush, the seal rolled neatly into the water and was gone. In a fit of rage the bear spun round and smashed his paws against a rock outcrop, breaking several of the bones in his right paw.

The animal seldom abandons a kill. Fortunately for the arctic foxes that accompany him on land, or on to coastal floes, he usually leaves much of the meat on a seal, for he prefers the blubber. He is not exclusively carnivorous. Summer sees him eat berries, eggs, and fish; and in winter he may eat a little grass, but, as already stated in the case of the she-bear, merely that growing within the narrow confines of the hollow wherein he hibernates.

Only when starving will the arctic bear contemplate cannibalism. Indeed, he will eat almost anything but bear-meat. On finding a cache of seal, walrus, caribou, or fish, he gorges himself. But he will not so much as touch the meat in a cache of bear-steaks.

The polar bear is inquisitive to a marked degree. It will investigate a cache simply to discover what it contains, and enter a cabin for no other reason than that it wants to know what is inside, and if the door is closed it is prepared to force an entry to satisfy curiosity. Hang two or three tins outside your cabin and you can be sure that should a bear pass he will investigate. He may decide to give the tin cans a wide berth and continue

on his way, but the chances are that before he has gone a dozen yards he will stop, turn round, stare uncertainly at the cans, and then return to sniff at them.

THE ice bear is sometimes described as 'dangerous.' It is true that he is dangerous when cornered, in the defence of the cubs, or when starving, but, normally, he retreats on seeing man or dog. When goaded into chasing his antagonist he may suddenly give up the race and lope away, apparently because his purpose is less to kill than to defeat his enemies. There are records of a wounded bear overtaking its would-be killer only to trundle away without administering so much as a token physical rebuke.

When cornered, he is ever ready to fight fiercely, using his paws in the manner of a man with two scythes; but, frequently, instead of killing the husky sufficiently unfortunate to come within his grasp, he shakes the dog he catches and throws it aside contemptuously. When chased he has the peculiar habit of scooping up mouthfuls of snow with his tongue. This melts in his stomach and slows him down, so that he can be overhauled and killed.

The snowy-owls that flit about the polar bear's head in early spring have considerably better hearing than the polar bear; the bear's companion at many a meal, the polar fox, has better sight. But the bear's sense of smell is supreme. He has been known to detect the smell of burning blubber from a distance of two or three miles.

On snow and ice the animal moves with the silence of a shadow, thanks partly to superb balance and partly to the close-set

hairs on the soles of its broad feet. It can also be remarkably quiet on a rocky surface—witness the she-bear who sneaked up on the Norwegian trapper, Henri Rudi, one summer day in Clavering Island, Greenland, and knocked a baulk of wood from his shoulder, and, when he tried to shoot her, chased him to his cabin.

The arctic bear is hunted mercilessly. Indeed, Rudi alone shot 125 in one winter in Spitsbergen; and the Eskimos themselves are no less diligent than the white hunter in their slaying.

The liver is never eaten, for it has poisonous effects both on man and on his dogs. We have yet to ascertain why bear liver has these poisonous effects, but research suggests that it is too heavily charged with vitamin A, the sudden extreme dosage producing headaches, violent retching, and peeling of the skin.

The remoteness of the polar bear's stamping-grounds renders it well-nigh impossible to enforce game laws, and in any case this would not be fair in areas where the Eskimos hunt the animal for its meat. In the past, even the white hunter did not always differentiate between the gnarled old bachelor and the she-bear with cubs. It was a recognised practice in some parts of Greenland to place poisoned meat on floes frequented by bears, and if the cubs died with their mother then the trapper was that much richer in furs and tender steaks. To-day the hunter is more circumspect. Furthermore, in some parts of the Arctic the polar bear is protected during the breeding season, and, in Canada, for example, the sale of cub-sized pelts and the trapping of cubs for zoos is prohibited, which is indeed fortunate for the future of an animal with fascinating characteristics.

Lad and Lass

*When they meet on a petal
And match their mettle,
Does the bee sting the nettle,
Or the nettle the bee?—
You are asking me.*

*When the girl's such a witty one,
Do her lips take their due,
Or the boy kiss her, pretty one?—
I am asking you.*

GEOFFREY JOHNSON.

Pierrot

Baptiste Deburau of the Funambules

PHILIP JOHN STEAD

ONE remembers them shivering on the windy beaches, the wheeled wooden stage quaking under the weight of the upright-piano, and the comic coming round with a bag on the end of a stick to collect from the spectators. The Pierrots, they were always called, and their floury faces, white costumes, and black skullcaps were vaguely associated with 'On with the Motley' and the masks and costumes of fancy-dress balls. Ballet and romantic poetry, too, preserve Pierrot's image. The more one thinks about him, the more it seems that he has always been familiar. Who is he, then? For the answer we must go to the Paris of the years after Waterloo.

There was a theatre there, in the boulevard that was affectionately known as the Boulevard du Crime, a little noisome den of a theatre called the Funambules. The word means 'ropewalkers,' and in its early days the actors of the Funambules all had to make their entrance on the rope and preserve silence throughout the performance. So the drama at the Funambules had to be acted without words and by acrobats. In the theatre, necessity is the mother of invention. These restrictive regulations resulted in the development of one of the purest of theatrical arts, the art of mime.

This art was dear to the boulevard audiences. They were simple folk and words were nothing to them. Their theatre was as much a part of their lives as cheap red wine and fried potatoes. It cost them four sous to sit in the gods of the Funambules and a box-seat was only a franc. They were the working folk and the idlers of the district. They reeked of garlic. They were noisy and demonstrative as they sat in the light of candles and oil-lamps; they knew what they liked. There were six performances a day and nine on

Sunday. The bill included fire-swallowers, conjurors, and a pantomime without words in which Colombine, the daughter of miserly old Cassandre, fell in love with Harlequin, much to her father's disgust, and in which Pierrot, Cassandre's oafish servant, was everyone's butt and buffoon.

ONE night, there was no Pierrot. The manager had sacked him for certain fleshly malfeasances and no successor had been found. But the audience was not prepared to sit through an evening without Pierrot. They demanded that the dismissed actor be reinstated at once. In despair, the manager racked his brains to think of someone he could send on to play the part. And the only person he could think of, with his audience howling and raging for Pierrot, was the comic member of his acrobatic troupe, Baptiste Deburau. He announced Baptiste. The audience roared in derision.

To appreciate the joke of Baptiste playing Pierrot, one must know a little about him. He was the youngest son of the acrobat Deburau and, in a family of fine acrobats, he was the great disappointment. Because he had none of the family grace and agility, his father had made him the merry-andrew of the troupe. He was the stooge in such feats as required a body to be bumped on the ground. One of his jobs was to lie with a coin balanced on his nose while his brother knocked it off with a cudgel heavy enough to dash out his brains. He had been beaten and reviled all the way across Europe and back, the scapegrace and underdog of the family. It had been with the greatest difficulty that his father had got him engaged with the rest of the family for a season at the Fun-

ambules, and he had been by no means a conspicuous success. They had sent him on to play villains, and everybody had laughed at him. So, when he came before the audience as Pierrot, theatrical sacrilege was being done.

But it came off. The sight of the impossible Baptiste in Pierrot's costume was so richly comic that the Funambules dissolved into laughter. In that moment began the sympathy between actor and audience that is the strict essential of great theatre. In the swift seconds during which Baptiste realised that he had power to make these people laugh, Pierrot was reborn.

Subtly the pantomime underwent a change. Instead of Cassandre making a fool of Pierrot, it was now the other way round. Colombine no longer smacked his face and despised him but found him a place in her heart. Harlequin, who had started hitting out with his lath sword as soon as the old Pierrot came in sight, now treated him with the utmost respect. The oafish buffoon was dead. With the full approval of the gods, Pierrot became the central figure of the pantomime.

HOW did he do it? Partly, no doubt, because in the wandering years when he played before audiences who spoke foreign languages the clown Baptiste had taught himself the difficult art of mime. But there was more to it than that. He made the dreams of his long slavery as the underdog come true. Pierrot also was an underdog, and when he began to triumph, the audience in the gods of the Funambules recognised their own longings coming to life. As he fooled his master, and his master's daughter looked kindly upon him, despite the presence of brilliant Harlequin, glory came to the gallery. After years of playing sixth-fiddle in a company of six, Baptiste had arrived.

His fame spread beyond the boulevard, but he never left the Funambules. Once he had played in a charity performance at one of the great theatres of Paris and failed utterly. He knew that his horizon must be limited by the back wall of the Funambules gallery; outside that magic circle, his spell was impotent. He was offered five hundred francs a month to play at the Opera and refused. Nevertheless, he was famous. The young writers who were to be the great Romantics of French literature came to the boxes of the

Funambules and wrote books and articles of praise about the strange mime who was eloquent in silence and whose white face and expressive body brought whole worlds of drama on the stage. Someone wrote that while the dancers of the Opera mimed the vapid language of fashion, Baptiste Deburau mimed the racy, vital speech of the streets. He passed into the language of the boulevard—people said 'as self-possessed as Baptiste,' just as one might say 'as pleased as Punch,' for his presence on the stage was cool and nonchalant and calmly superior. Deburau was making up for the years Baptiste had spent tumbling in the dust.

He was the rage for sixteen years. His biographers tell us a little about his early love affairs, about the lovely *grisette* to whom he gave sugar-pigs and bunches of violets and with whom he walked home through the rain—for Deburau was always poor. The managers had him under contract to play for thirty-five francs a week while he was making their fortune. And there was the mysterious lady who sat alone in a stage-box, elegant, beautiful, adorned, who came every evening and kept her smile for Pierrot. But during his years of fame, the little time Deburau spent away from the theatre was spent with his family. His great affections were his art, his children, and his bulldog, César. When we catch a glimpse of him in the boulevard, it is not in the carriage of a gay lady, but walking with his wife and children, severely dressed in black, with a stovepipe hat and a heavy stick and a positively mournful manner. It seems that in private life he wanted to be as unlike Pierrot as possible. The black clothing of the sober citizen was a symbol of the change from the white robes of Pierrot.

BELOVED as Deburau was of his audience, the workers and writers of Paris, life was never easy for him. He struggled for most of his theatrical career against the jealous English mime who was the Funambules Harlequin. As has been said, he was always poor. The managers were tyrannical. And he was a sick man. Asthma was tearing his lungs to pieces in the last six years of his life, and he was possessed by a morbid fear of losing his hold over the audience. A contemporary tells us: 'As soon as he came on the stage the sickness left him; he became young again, for a quarter of an hour, happy

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and debonair. Yet the terrible illness awaited him in the wings, under the oil-lamp, and laid its claw upon the mime's breast as he made his exit.'

His latter years were saddened, too, by a tragedy in which he had been involved. He was walking in the street with his wife when a hooligan started shouting abuse after him. When the fellow became too persistent to be ignored, Deburau struck him with his cane. The wretch fell and fractured his skull. Deburau had to stand trial for murder, and although he was acquitted, the thought that he had caused the death of a human being haunted him ever afterwards.

The doctors told him to rest, and he went out of the bill for three weeks. One morning he felt better, and the posters announced his return. Enough people queued outside the Funambules to fill five theatres. That night he played *The Wedding of Pierrot*, and the audience cheered his entrance to the echo. He bowed, his hand on his heart; and for the first time, Pierrot wept. When the musical cue came for him to perform the eccentric dance he had invented, the secret of which perished with him, he was too moved by his great reception to begin it. Someone in the gods shouted for it, but with one voice the rest of the house, the rough folk of the Funambules cried: 'No!' A thousand people waited in the Boulevard du Crime and outside the smoky little stage-door to see him come out. Some premonition made him carry the white wedding-bouquet he had worn for his part. 'It was for his wedding with Death,'

said Champfleury, the writer. He died a few days later and the stage-hands carried his coffin to Père Lachaise. His epitaph? 'Here lies an actor who said everything, yet never spoke.'

IT is over a hundred years since they buried Deburau in Père Lachaise, but Pierrot has lived on. Malicious persons have insisted that he was not a great actor at all, but merely a literary fashion, born of the infectious romanticism that pervaded Paris in his time. That is not true, for Pierrot, his Pierrot, the sympathetic Pierrot who is no buffoon but a thing of passion, expressive of tragedy as well as comedy, did not die. A succession of Pierrots in the direct line prove the greatness of his creator. In 1930 died the French mime Séverin, who was the pupil of Rouffe, who learned his art from Deburau's son, Charles, who learned it from Deburau himself. And Séverin's greatest success was in 'The Old Clo' Man,' which was in the Funambules repertory a few years before Baptiste Deburau died. Nor has Pierrot perished with Séverin, as anyone knows who has seen Jean-Louis Barrault play the part of Baptiste Deburau in the film *Les Enfants du Paradis*. Baptiste created something that had not been in the world before he lived—Pierrot, who is the simple, foolish element of the human heart, and upon whose blank white face can be written either laughter or sorrow, and whose place in the great masked-ball of the imagination is always secure.

Winter Landscape

*Drab-etched are barren trees on sombre skies;
The iron-rutted lane, all powdered white,
Rings to the heel—the knell for dusk's demise
Beneath the thrust of chill, encroaching night.
Beyond bleak hedgerows massed in heavy line
Dim frozen fields in sleep uneasy lie;
A wafer moon burns redly in decline,
Mourned by a distant barn-owl's eerie cry.
No gleam betrays the river's leaden way;
All mystery enshrouds its muted mirth,
And silhouetted mist in threadbare grey
Parades a threat to unresisting earth.
Then what content do homeward steps inspire,
What joy in scented logs on cottage fire.*

ARTHUR TURCK.

The Devil in a Duck-Marsh

KERRY WOOD

IT was the opening-day of the duck-shooting season and Mack Gummow shivered as he sat in the punt and waited for the dawn. Normally he would have been all keyed up with anticipation, too excited to feel cold, but on this frosty autumn morning Mack could not hold back the shudders that racked through him. Gummow was a sick man; pain was his constant companion now, and pain can do strange things to a man's outlook on life. Other years Mack had been the jovial life of the party on opening-day jaunts, but this season he had evaded the invitations of friends and had come out to this secluded slough alone, and he wanted to stay alone and watch the coming of dawn. 'Perhaps this is my last shoot,' he muttered, and the darkness hid the drawn, tight worry-lines on his face. 'The last time!'

Only Mack knew how sick he was. Others had seen the merry fat shrink off his big frame and leave the skin hanging loose and fallow, but only Mack knew of the gnawing ache in his vitals. So he had come out alone this season, with sombre thoughts for company.

He remembered other days. He remembered the grand times he'd had with friends Reddy Mott, old Hank Jaynes, and Lem Barber. All good boys, good sports. He recalled the hilarious fun they'd had at their log club-house out at Long Lake. And the shoots—Lord, what shoots they'd known there! Wonderful flights of ducks and geese, with snipe plentiful in the marsh during the hot hours of day.

Then Mack thought of the birds themselves and experienced a strange, new sympathy for the creatures he had killed. A sad thing that men found such lusty fun in killing. Mack reached for his gun, fondling the smooth, clean lines of the thoroughbred double. Many's the fine shot he had made with it,

but now the weapon felt clammy in his hands as he called to mind the death it had dealt out.

SO Mack Gummow sat there brooding as the dawn slowly tinted the sky and the duck-marsh began to waken. Perhaps he heard the chirring of the coots, the plaintive, questioning call of the rails, and the deep, unctuous vocals of the mallards. Perhaps he heard all the stir of activity, the whicker of wings, the splashings and crackling of reeds as unseen creatures woke to life around him. But, when he raised his head again, he could not control a jerk of surprise when he saw the shadowy outline of a man standing near him.

'Good morning,' called the stranger.

'Hey!' Mack snatched up his paddle in sudden panic. 'Don't move, mister! How did you get there anyway? This whole place is a muskeg-swamp, full of holes. Stand still, and I'll come right over with the boat.' He shunted his way through the reeds until he was alongside the man, fearful as he felt the oozy bottom recede under the paddle when he tried to dig in the blade and brace the boat. The stranger stepped lightly into the craft.

'Phew!' Mack breathed easier as the other settled himself on the forward seat. 'Man, you gave me a real scare. I once got stuck in the muskeg here myself, and I wasn't half as far out as you were. It's a straight miracle you weren't sucked down. One more step, and— Well, just feel the bottom here with the paddle.' The stranger laughed softly. 'I had no trouble,' he said, and laughed again as Mack wiped perspiration from his forehead. 'You are needlessly excited, sir.'

'I know this place,' Mack countered, and tried to pierce the dim light to see the other's face. 'My name's Gummow, Mack Gummow. Do I know you, mister?'

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'No, I hardly think so, Mr Gummow. I just happened along for a shoot.'

Mack felt a twinge of irritation. The man was so damned easy-mannered, yet he hadn't the sense to offer his name when the chance was given. He was about to speak about it, when a new sound interrupted. Their voices had disturbed the birds and they heard a great raft of ducks lift off the waters near them with a heavy vibration of wings. The stranger turned suddenly, poking up his gun. It was just light enough to see outlines etched against the dawn sky. Bang! A bird gave an agonised squawk as it thudded down into the reeds. Mack headed the boat that way and the other man reached out for the dead duck.

'Nice shot,' commented Mack. 'Look, stranger, have you got a blind built somewhere, where I can drop you off?'

'No, Mr Gummow,' the other answered. 'If I will not inconvenience you too much, sir, I would like to stay here in the boat with you.'

Gummow felt another surge of irritation. A duck-hunter is always selfish about sharing his boat and shooting-point, except with friends. For a rank stranger to step out of the reeds into a man's punt, then calmly announce that he'd like to shoot from it, was just plain gall. Of course, Mack had insisted on saving the man from the muskeg, so he was partly responsible. 'Sure,' Gummow muttered. 'Guess it'll be all right. But mind where you swing that gun, mister.'

'I will, sir,' the stranger returned courteously, and suddenly raised it and shot again. A bird tumbled out of the dark sky and splashed as it struck the water. Mack had just got the punt poked into the reeds once more and screened out of sight of the ducks, but he reversed his paddle and headed into the open water again, seething to himself as he did so. There was only one paddle, so the stranger could not help him manage the boat. Still, he might at least have offered to take a turn.

They retrieved the duck, and Mack shoved the boat towards cover again. Before he could reach the reeds the stranger elevated his gun-muzzle and a streak of flame shot up as a flock of birds whickered over. This time they heard the heavy body hurtling down, and the duck almost struck the side of the boat. The stranger gave a little laugh as he reached out a hand and seized the bird. He wrung its neck with a single snap of his wrist and tossed it into the bottom of the punt.

Three shots, three birds. Good shooting,

Mack admitted, even though he was getting angry. He hadn't fired a single shell himself, yet here he was doing all the work. Gummow felt a bit sorry about his first impulsive kindness to the stranger. He should have let the man stand in the muskeg, and welcome. Then Mack remembered the sinking horror of the treacherous mud, and relented. 'What kind of gun have you got there, mister?' he asked by way of starting conversation again.

'Oh, it is just an old single-shot I borrowed for the day.'

'Well, you certainly know how to handle it,' Mack complimented. 'Three shots for three birds is good shooting any time, especially so in this poor light.'

'Thank you,' acknowledged the stranger, giving a subdued chuckle of appreciation.

'And now, Mr Gummow, it is time you warmed up your own gun, sir. Do you see this lone bird coming in from the east? Let him have it, then.'

BEFORE the other man had appeared on the scene, Mack Gummow had been thinking about the deaths his slim-built double had dealt out, and he had half-decided not to add to its score, at least not this morning. But now the spirit of competition was on him. The stranger's gunning had aroused the old lust for the kill, and Mack felt no qualms as he swung his gun to the shoulder and glued his eyes on the approaching duck. He gave it the spread-barrel with his front trigger, but the bird did not falter. Mack pulled the muzzle ahead again and let go with his second barrel. The duck did not show any evidence of a hit, though the range had been only twenty or thirty yards.

'Sfunny,' Mack observed, half to himself. 'I thought I had his number, sure.'

'The light is still bad,' the stranger solaced him, but Mack thought he detected a note of mirth in the other's voice.

'Oh, well,' Mack muttered. 'Better luck next time.'

'And here is the next time.' The stranger pointed to the east again. A fast-flying flock of baldpates came hurtling towards them. Mack had just time to shuck out the empties and plunge in two live cartridges. He up with the gun and gave the baldies a good lead and let go—one, two! But not a bird wavered; not a pellet struck home.

'Well, I'll be—,' cried Mack, staring aloft

THE DEVIL IN A DUCK-MARSH

in amazement. Then he plucked the empties out of the smoking breech, looking sheepishly across at the stranger. The light was still murky, but he felt sure the other was smiling. 'I can't understand it,' Mack said. 'Easy shots, both of 'em, and I missed them clean. Can't understand it at all.'

'Here's another bird.' The stranger pointed in the sky once again. 'A lone teal.'

The speedy bluewing came whizzing close, almost at head-level. Mack got his gun up, waited until the bird sighted the boat and wheeled sideways, then pulled his trigger on the easy target. The bird kept flying, so Mack jerked the gun on to it, pulled ahead, and let go again. But the duck went speeding off into the mists, unscathed.

'Something's wrong,' Mack growled with feeling. 'No fooling, mister. I had a perfect bead on that bird and on those baldies, too. Something's wrong.'

'Certainly,' agreed the stranger, almost too readily and too politely. 'Perhaps the size of shot?'

'I'm using fives,' Mack grunted. 'Haven't another size on me.'

'Fives should be about right, one would think. I'm using fives myself.'

Suddenly the stranger made a half-turn, threw up his weapon, and sent a shot streaking skywards. This time they heard a double splash as two birds fell. Mack reached for the paddle in silence. He didn't begrudge the other man his sport. He wasn't mad because the stranger could hit them and he couldn't. But quite distinctly he realised something was wrong. He'd handled that old gun long enough to know what it would do, and every shot had been an easy one. Yet he'd missed, missed wide every time.

They found the stranger's two ducks and added them to the pile at his end of the punt.

'Let me manage the boat for a while,' the man offered then, and Mack felt better towards him. The stranger deftly shunted the boat back into the reeds, just in time to reach hiding before a large flock of heavy-flying mallards came over. Mack up with his gun and let go a double blast, taking time to line on a single bird. But he missed again, and he was putting down his gun in mournful disgust when the stranger carelessly threw up his weapon, hardly taking time to aim. One fat bird tumbled out of the flock and splashed near.

'Nice shot,' Mack gave due praise. Then he put down his gun decisively and reached

across for the paddle. 'You do the shootin', stranger. I'm going to cool my gun till it's real light. Seems like my eyes are playing tricks on me in this gloaming.'

They had only just finished retrieving this last duck, however, when the mists of morning split wide open above them as the gold of the sun topped the horizon. Then the marsh came alive as flock after flock of ducks rose out of the reeds and went winging across the clear morning sky. In a moment Mack's gun was up again, thudding twice. He reloaded feverishly and shot once more as another flock came near. Then he started to curse a little to himself. He was missing blind, even in this good light. He sent a dozen shots skywards as fast as he could shoot, but not a single feather floated down to reward his efforts. And finally he stopped, tingling with the greater certainty than ever that something was wrong.

The stranger had not been shooting. He had politely kept his gun down and had hold of the paddle, ready to retrieve any bird that Gummow dropped. But now Mack emptied the last pair of spent shells from his gun and left the breech clear. 'Mister, there's something screwy here,' he said slowly, putting the gun gently down on the bottom of the boat. 'I can't just say what it is, but something's gone haywire. I never missed birds like that, never in all my life.' He reached again for the paddle. 'You shoot, stranger, and I'll manage the boat.'

SO the stranger started. He dropped the leader out of the first flock to come over, then shucked a new shell into the breech and upped the muzzle to pick the tail-end out of the same flock. He knocked a couple out of a dense-flying flock of scaup, and a sizzling fast little green-winged teal, scorching across the reed-tops in rocketing flight, crumpled suddenly when the rusty old single-shot belched forth its load. A lone canvasback came over, sighted the men in the boat, and wheeled sharply. The stranger up with his gun, and the duck's head doubled under its body as it plummeted down.

'S-a-a-y!' Mack ejaculated. 'That bird was a hundred yards away if it was an inch.'

'Yes, a rather long shot, wasn't it?'

Mack turned and looked at the soft-spoken stranger. 'Long!' he cried. Then he looked again. 'Hullo, haven't I seen you somewhere?'

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It was his first good look at the other man in the strong light of morning.

The stranger was an exceptionally handsome fellow, with proudly-chiselled features. The forehead was magnificently high, the nose well-formed, long, and aquiline, and there was a wide, firm mouth above a strongly-moulded chin. Mack felt sure he had seen the striking countenance before, but the other smiled and shook his head. 'I think not,' he said softly. 'I think not, sir.' Mack looked away, not wishing to embarrass the man by staring. But there was something definitely familiar about that handsome face.

'Twelve ducks,' Gummow said, counting the dead birds lying in the end of the boat. 'Twelve birds. That's your bag-limit.'

'Bag-limit?'

'Sure—you know. We're allowed twelve a day this season, according to the game laws.'

The stranger smiled as he swung the gun up, sighted on a high-flying shoveller, and fired. The distant bird let out a nasal quack, then crumpled out of the sky and raised a three-foot splash when it struck the water.

'Say!' Mack turned in amazement towards the shooter. 'Mister, that bird was away over a hundred yards' distance!'

'Yes, I thought so myself,' the other returned in his mild way.

Mack gave his head a shake. It was unbelievable that a shotgun could kill at such a range. But even as he marvelled the stranger threw up his weapon once more and a pair of ducks came fluttering down. Long shots, too—amazingly long shots.

'Hey, wait a minute!' Mack protested. 'You've gone over your legal bag-limit, mister. Twelve is the number allowed, and you've taken fifteen birds. So hold on, now. Enough's enough.'

But the stranger jerked up the gun again and down fell a fat mallard. 'I never heard of a bag-limit, sir,' he stated as he quickly reloaded and raised the gun once more. 'So far as I know there is no limit.'

'Hey!' Mack shouted, getting angry as the seventeenth bird tumbled out of the sky. 'Wait a minute, now! I never did hold with game-hogging, mister, and if you're that kind of hunter I'll thank you to do your shooting from some other boat than mine. D'ye hear?'

'Ohhhhh,' hummed the stranger, lowering his gun and smiling at Gummow. 'My apologies, sir. You are quite right, of course. I am taking advantage of your hospitality,

and I offer you my most humble apologies.'

'Wellll,' Mack looked at the man again, and he began to feel uncomfortable. He had seen this fellow before, sure enough—perhaps not face to face, like this, but pictures, maybe. Mack wasn't one to forget faces, and this man's face—he looked as if he might be famous. It was certainly a distinguished countenance. And odd, too. The ears, now; the ears were quite pointed. And the eyes—Mack looked away. Then he glanced hurriedly at the stranger's eyes again. Almost he would have sworn that the man had red eyes. Red eyes! Oh, nonsense!

'HERE is a bird for you, sir,' the stranger cried, pointing urgently. 'Quick, Mr Gummow—here is your chance.'

Mack turned, reaching instinctively for his weapon. He half-raised it to his shoulder, then paused. A huge, black-coloured bird was flapping slowly towards them. A monster bird. 'It's a goose,' breathed the stranger. 'Shoot!'

Mack raised the gun, pushed off the safety-catch, but that was all. He did not press the trigger. This was no goose, he knew. It was larger than any honker Mack had seen, and jet-black. A huge, sinister-looking bird, indistinct as to shape, despite its nearness. It passed directly overhead, and Mack saw the fierce, red eyes flash down at him. But he did not shoot. He lowered his gun and stared open-mouthed after the evil creature as it floated slowly from sight.

The stranger scowled at him. 'Why did you not shoot?' he demanded, suddenly angry.

'I—I don't know,' Mack faltered, and he was trembling all over. 'My gun was empty, for one thing. But—I didn't want to shoot, anyway. I didn't know what it was.'

'It was a goose,' the stranger insisted, still angry. 'You missed a fine chance.'

Mack Gummow fumbled for the paddle and drove the boat out into the water. They gathered up the rest of the other's ducks, then Mack headed for the muskrat run which provided a water-avenue to shore. The shoot was over so far as he was concerned, and it was obvious that the stranger thought so too. When they reached the solid ground the stranger stepped out, gathered his ducks together, and strode off without a word or a backward glance.

Mack stared after him, wishing he could

have looked at the man's eyes again, just to be sure. But—the stranger's ears were quite pointed. Oh, yes, he was certain of that. And there was no doubt in his mind as to what that great sinister black bird had

represented. As the stranger vanished among the shore willows, Mack Gummow felt the oppression lift from him. He felt better than he'd been for months. But he was thoughtful, too—very thoughtful.

Why Paint?

G. RIDSDILL SMITH

WHY indeed? R. L. Stevenson, in *Virginibus Puerisque*, says that 'a little amateur painting in water-colours shows the innocent and quiet mind.' But he was writing for girls about the kind of husbands they ought to marry. Safe now in married middle-age, I can admit, with regret, that my painting shows nothing of the sort. The urge to lay about me with colour, to hurl on to paper the vision that made me gasp with wonder, comes suddenly and will not go till I have wasted sheet after sheet of paper trying to capture it. It is a bitter and humiliating experience—the enemy to all quiet of mind.

My artist's progress, if it may be so dignified, started in the nursery at home with the bound volumes of a melodramatically-illustrated magazine called *With the Flag to Pretoria*, all the more heroic pictures from which my brother and I spent hours and hours copying with meticulous care, for presentation to our friends and relations. One such effort—a grim picture called 'Facing Death'—I gave to an uncle who was, unknown to me, even then dying himself; he did die a week later, and our nurse seized on this as a weapon with which to counter the artistic temperament and get her way over tidiness in the house.

She need not have worried, for we soon went away to school and were taught drawing, among other things, by a German professor reputed to have fled to England to escape military conscription. Bearded, skull-capped,

pince-nezed, he was eminently raggable, especially when we were astride our donkeys drawing dreary groups of white cubes and cones and cylinders. Starting with pencil, we were later allowed to shade these horrors with charcoal and stumps. 'Stumping' has, I think, died a well-deserved death, but it flourished then, and I still have the head of one of Queen Victoria's ponies (by Landseer) which I stumped, and a copy of one of that every-picture-tells-a-story series, 'Dignity and Impudence,' which all but stumped me.

From this slough of despond we were rescued by the headmaster's wife, who instituted weekly sketching competitions, choosing the subject but letting us draw pretty much what and how we liked. Every Sunday the entries were displayed in her drawing-room and voted on, with much audible comment, by the rest of the school, and at the end of term she gave a prize. I have many of those sketches yet, and looking over them takes me forty years back in the twink of an eye, so that I am once more among the scenes I tried to paint—the bluebell wood, the farmyard, Linton Lock with somebody falling in fully clothed, the lilacs and laburnums on the terrace, to say nothing of the 'B.O.P.' type of thriller we loved to illustrate.

In the holidays a new phase started when an amateur yachtsman introduced me to copper-plate etching. In his studio overlooking the broad Humber and his yacht at her moorings we scratched away on plates, he on copper,

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I, the beginner, on humble zinc, and I can still catch the pungent smell of the ground as we laid it sizzling and smoking on the hot plates, and the sour odour of the acid as I later hung over the dish watching it bubble and eat into the lines I had scratched, just as clearly as I can hear my host's wife banging into the studio and blowing us up for being late for tea. We had both forgotten all about time, of course (one of the artist's many charms, although infuriating to lesser mortals), but the muffins tasted all the better when held in inky fingers as we lolled with the dogs round a flickering fire.

Then back again to the studio, with its models of yachts and framed prints all round the walls. My host never drew anything but ships—steamers, sailing-ships, barges—except once when he put a cat into one of his Christmas-cards and thereby began a frightful feud with a mutual impressionist friend who said that no cat had eyes like that. His, he said, was a ship's cat, and they argued about cats' eyes, marine and terraneous, for years.

There was a proper press, which I sometimes used for printing, but more often I had to improvise with the kitchen mangle at home, which disorganised the cook. Still, it was fun spreading and wiping off the ink and, with unexpected help from the uneven wooden rollers of the mangle, achieving exciting fluke effects. Since then I've discovered how many effects can be faked in all branches of art, what with knife and rag, rubber, razor-blade, nail-brush and water; and I seem to remember that this was one of the points at issue between the sailor and the impressionist. She accused him of monkeying about with his ink-wiping, and he replied in rather too forthright sailor language that that was better than holding your sketch under the tap and scrubbing it with a nail-brush.

THEN came the first war, and I left school to join the Flying Corps, an unlikely environment, one would think, in which to draw. The authorities, however, thought otherwise and offered us unlimited time and scope. We were sentenced at first to two months' 'square-bashing' at Oxford, just to discipline us, they said, though most of the cadets had already served in France or done four years in their O.T.C.'s, and the Canadians I was with registered their disapproval by organised spit-drill—clear the throat most

nauseously, two steps smartly forward, spit, two steps smartly back, stand at ease. When we did at last pass on to aerodromes, flying was mostly at dawn, about 3 or 3.30, and we were left with hours of spare time to fill in somehow or other.

My sketches at this date were water-colours of Oxford or crude chalk caricatures of my friends and enemies—on one page the porch of St Mary the Virgin, with its stone corkscrew pillars, and on the next Old Walrus, our bawling bull-necked P.T. Instructor, doing 'trunk forward bend' rather obscenely. There are white planes looking like butterflies on the small grass aerodromes of those days, scruffy airmen of fact, natty airmen of fiction, and generally a blue-eyed blonde lurking about.

This romantic phase changed suddenly to a grimmer one of hospital life, where there was even more time to draw. The airmen in jaunty caps, double-breasted, yellow breeches, and elegant boots gave place to slippered, unshaven, dressing-gowned patients suffering all the ludicrous humiliations of hospital treatment. Here was George, my portly spiritualistic neighbour-in-bed, page after page of him, always wearing those terrible red and blue check pyjamas, retailing his shady adventures to a credulous audience of fellow-patients, which included three gunners (one noseless, one toothless, and one jawless), who made up for what they couldn't eat by drinking, and whose alcoholic excursions had a set of cartoons to themselves. Sisters in blue and scarlet capes, all flashing eyes and graceful curves, crowd the pages, soothing, torturing, charming, infuriating their helpless patients, and the earthy orderly pads the wards in off-white coat and sloppy plimsolls. Only the surgeons were, prudently, left alone, the knife being mightier than the pencil. All this sketching passed the long days in bed in a miraculous way and seemed to amuse the people I dared show the results to.

There follow, in contrast, a number of water-colours I made on sick leave, and looking at them now I can relive the miracle of that spring and summer when I was able to forget the war. Here are orchards in blossom, the deer-park full of deer, the moat pale-green and speared by yellow flags, the sluggish river between its buttercup banks, the Tudor chapel (where I played the latest songs on the old harmonium fit to bust it), and the old house itself, from whose wistaria-scented

windows you could see the field of Marston Moor and the White Horse cut in the Hambleton Hills. These pictures, though artistically worthless, I keep for their associations; also, you never know your luck, for I sent one of them (a pencil-drawing of a leaden blackamoor, who sat halfway up the heraldic staircase, with a candle in his hand to light the way up) to *Country Life* the other day, because people were writing about the 17th-century Dutchman who cast this little figure, and they not only published it but sent me a cheque.

AFTER the war I went up to Cambridge, where life was too full for much but occasional cartoons for the College magazine, one of which—of the Tutor all dressed to kill, leering at the misogynist Dean in Boy Scout kit—nearly got me sent down. And I made vain efforts to compose a picture of a favourite hunter of mine, with myself on his back. He had gone to grass at the good old age of twenty-three and all I had to work from was a very dim and very small snapshot taken in the stableyard one misty November morning before a hunt. I tried copying it, tracing it, enlarging it, drawing from memory, but if the result looked like a horse the rider wouldn't sit on it, and if the rider looked right then the horse was a monster. So I gave it up, and a good thing too, for only a Lionel Edwards could have done justice to that bold black fellow who knew more about hunting than I ever shall.

I have since tried to draw other animals—dogs and cats, cows and sheep—but none of them ever kept still long enough, so at last I bought a book on animal-drawing. It was no good, and even now the only way I can draw my dog is to wait till he's asleep in his basket, in just the same way as I have to wait till my children are asleep before I can draw them. One day an artist, a real one, let me into his secret of animal-drawing, and showed me the painted plasticine model of a horse and cart which he merely placed in whatever light or position he liked and drew into his picture. That may be all right for animals, who aren't fussy about a likeness, but it would be a tricky business with one's friends. You would be lucky if you escaped with your scalpel—and your scalp.

In the vacations from Cambridge I went climbing, and a set of small sketch-books reminds me of those days. The whole outfit

—miniature palette, tubes of paint in tobacco-tin, tiny metal water-container, and sketch-book—fitted in one pocket of my rucksack and went up and down many a mountain.

There are English books of rock-climbs round Snowdon and in the Lakes, and one backside view of our leader, all 'monstrous hemispheres' like Jorrock's dread vision, overhanging the smooth slimy rock up which we below hoped he would later be able to pull us.

There's a book of the Pyrenees. First, vivid water-colours of the Val d'Arazas, a valley of flowering meadows and forests of rowan and chestnut and birch, full of rushing streams and the tinkle of cowbells, and, soaring up into the blue on either hand, great ochre cliffs, turreted, arcaded, and buttressed like dizzy castles in Spain. And as for the inn we reached at the end of a fourteen-hours' climb, the fresh trout, the omelettes, the wine consumed by moonlight to the clink of mule-shoes on the cobbles outside and a twangling of guitars from the bar, I thought, and still think, it was the inn of inns. Then there are two black-and-white drawings I made when I couldn't sleep in the hot tent, and the night outside was cool and bright with stars, and the pilgrims' pass through the mountains to the shrine of St James of Compostella seemed lit by the Milky Way, which they sometimes call St James's Way. And there are sketches from another camp-site below the mighty Cirque de Gavarnie, one of the wonders of the Pyrenees, whose glaciated walls are pierced by the Brèche de Roland, a gap cleft by Roland with his magic sword before he and his men perished at Roncesvalles. We came through it on our way from the Val d'Arazas, and a pencil scribble done in a howling gale shows one side of the Brèche driving through racing cloud like the black bows of a tall ship.

From Corsica are pencil-drawings of ancient skeleton firs shining white against the blue-green background of virgin forest. Also a bad water-colour of the stream below our camp swirling between huge pink and green rocks, with stones of all shades glinting in its green-gold bed. I did this one after washing socks and shirts in the stream, so no wonder it was bad. Another water-colour is of the ring of snow-peaks pointing like fingers to a windy sky, and a poster-effect pen-and-wash of the Bosche d'il Caballo Morto—in plain English, Dead Horse Wood.

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From Switzerland I brought only a few sketches, for we stayed in hotels whence the views were not inspiring and where too much precious time was spent waiting for meals, and eating them. In one hotel we played long games of spillikins, between the courses, with the wooden toothpicks each table was provided with. All the same, some caricatures of one paterfamilias, who shall be nameless, taking his string of daughters out on the rope, still make me smile.

Other books contain pen-and-ink sketches of a fishing holiday in Brittany (whence I returned empty-handed and sold my rod), with cartoons of our French host bowing us off to the gin-clear streams with dry-flies, while he himself went to work with a worm, and stealthily filled his basket from the mill-pond. Then come Bruges, and Zeebrugge, where a few pencil-drawings of the *Thetis*, *Iphigenia*, and *Intrepid*, sunk in the channel to blockade German U-boats, are a further reminder of the first war; and the Black Forest, with water-colours of the Rhine, beyond which the French were noisily holding their summer manoeuvres.

Further south those sketch-books take me. To Venice, where I intrepidly painted the Doge's Palace, all pink and white and gold against a thunderstorm background. So down the Adriatic, past islands whose olives and cypresses, fig-trees and pomegranates, I tried to paint, till we reached Ragusa. Here the old fortified harbour and sailing-ships, and the streets full of baggy red trousers and Balkan hats, fezzes, friars, black beards, and veiled women, were an artist's dream. But the dancing light, the honey-coloured battlements hung with flowering shrubs, and the aquamarine sea lapping the rock they were built on were beyond my palette. My most successful sketch here was, alas, a caricature of the fat dentist who extracted one of my teeth, our only common language being Latin—his ecclesiastical-medical, mine public-school.

HOW strange it is that whenever I open these sketch-books, all these memories, and many more, come back to people the pages. For that alone, if for no other reason, I keep them in spite of their fading colours and blurred lines. For that alone it was worth while trying to paint. Also this making of pictures, however unskilled, created a bond

between me and the real masters whose works we saw in the cities of Europe. After roughing it in the mountains, to descend to the plains and wander through famous galleries, feeling like shabby wolves among well-clad sheep—for we had wolfish appetites and a lean wolfish look about us—and to see through the masters' eyes the beauty of earth as they saw it, and as we had just seen it, peopled by peasants and shepherds, gods and goddesses and Christian saints, was to share their pantheistic fervour and to comprehend that creed Bernard Shaw put into the mouth of Dubedat, the dying artist: 'I believe in Michael Angelo, Velasquez, and Rembrandt, in the might of design, the mystery of colour, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen.'

What fun it has all been, and what wonderful recreation! And what a lot I have learned from it—among other things, that there is no end to this business of drawing and painting. The artist can go on trying out new forms of expression and new techniques till doomsday, and I hope beyond, and he'll never be satisfied. It's an endless quest. Then, of course, however badly he draws, he can't help developing his powers of observation. Richard Jefferies in one of his books says: 'There was work enough in that short piece of hedge by the potato-field for a good pencil every day the whole summer. And when done, you would not have been satisfied with it, but only have learned how complex and how thoughtful and far-reaching Nature is in the simplest things. But with a straight-edge or ruler anyone could draw the iron railings in half-an-hour, and a surveyor's pupil could make them look as well as Millais himself. Stupidity to stupidity, genius to genius; any hard fist can manage iron railings; a hedge is a task for the greatest.' And Ruskin, in the same spirit, said that on fine days he used to lie down on the grass and draw the blades as they grew 'until every square foot of meadow or mossy bank became an infinite possession to me.'

Those two words 'infinite possession' seem to me important. Not finite possession in a material sense, in the way a man possesses money or iron railings, but infinite possession of things seen and stored up in memory to become part of our very being—the little things, perfect in design, like daisies or snowflakes, as well as the pageantry of sun and

HOW TO BUY A PUPPY WITHOUT BEING SOLD A PUP

moon and cloud. And behind it all we begin to see, as through a glass darkly, the pattern of life, and to see ourselves also as part of that pattern and 'mighty harmony of all the powers unseen.' We've all felt this spiritual and physical serenity at one time or another in the humbler realms of sport, after making a well-timed stroke or jump or punch, or any other masterpiece of the game. Swift and almost instinctive with the athlete, it is slower and more contemplative with the artist, though that sudden flash of genius, when eye and hand are one for one miraculous second, is common to both.

We outgrow games, but we never outgrow painting, and it doesn't much matter how late in life we start. Churchill didn't start till he was over forty, and now he's an honorary

Academician. In his book *Painting as a Pastime* he tells how painting has become for him one of the three or four real hobbies which all men should have if they wish to be really happy and really safe. Safe, from him, sounds odd, for if any man has lived dangerously in our time, it is he. Safe from what? Well, guessing from my own experience, I should say safe, first of all, from boredom and from going about the world blind and deaf—safe, by one's own mistakes, from petty pride and from the false standards of chromium-plate civilisation—safe, in fact, from most brands of humbug. And happy? Take Churchill's own words: 'Happy are the painters, for they shall not be lonely. Light and colour, peace and hope, will keep them company to the end of the day.'

How to Buy a Puppy without being Sold a Pup

A BREEDER

THE danger is that all puppies are either funny or beautiful, and therefore in either case enchanting. You must steel your heart against round, joyfully-wriggling little bodies, bright eyes, and wobbly baby legs. After the first few weeks the infant charms will rapidly develop into the characteristics of the breed or type the puppies belong to. In order to avoid possible disappointment, before making your choice decide just what qualities and service you want from the dog into which your enchanting puppy will grow. Since, with ordinary good fortune, he will be a friend to share your home for many years, the matter is worth some consideration.

Perhaps companionship in a small flat is the main requirement? Then a cairn terrier, miniature poodle, Pekingese, or dachshund are, any of them, clever, affectionate little

dogs, who will be healthy and happy in such a life.

A dog for children to play with? For this purpose, among the small breeds, you could not beat the pug. He has always been a nursery favourite, who tolerates any amount of liberties from his young owners. Somewhat larger, the fox-terrier and cocker spaniel are generally good-tempered and fond of children. The bulldog, despite a formidable appearance, is most gentle and devoted. Then, accommodation, not to speak of food, permitting, what child would not adore a good-natured giant such as a St Bernard, Great Dane, or the beautiful white Pyrenean mountain-dog, willing in turn to be playmate, guard, or, if required, to 'pony'?

A guard for an isolated house? With Alsatian, boxer, or bull-terrier on the

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job, intruders one and all will pass you by.

To be trained for the gun? Suitable for sport or as a companion, a cocker or springer spaniel would be an excellent choice. If you prefer a bigger dog, there is the Labrador retriever, most highly commended by sportsmen for his intelligence and reliability; or one of the handsome setters, either of the English or Irish variety.

AMONG dog-loving people the rival merits of thoroughbred, crossbred, and mongrel are often discussed with some heat. While undoubtedly many crossbred or mongrel dogs are attractive and make excellent companions, the belief rather commonly held that they are both stronger and more intelligent than pedigree animals has not a great deal of foundation. Most people with experience of both types are agreed that neither has a monopoly of virtues, since the degree of hardihood or intelligence varies with each individual dog. Also, it should be realised that the most frequent cause of delicacy in a dog is bad rearing when a puppy. This, one would expect to be more common among mongrel puppies than with those of higher financial value.

In these days the low cost of a mongrel puppy—at most two or three pounds, sometimes only a few shillings—is a considerable point in its favour. The price of a pedigree pup, on the other hand, varies from three to twelve guineas for a pet, and much more for an outstanding specimen. Still, apart from the initial cost, the well-bred pup will be no more expensive to keep than the mongrel, with whom, however attractive, there is always a risk that the least desirable characteristics of two or more breeds may develop in later life.

MANY people, just as they go to the baker for bread, or to the butcher for meat, would go to a pet-shop to buy their puppy. Provided the shop is a good one, and apart from a certain risk that the pup may have been in contact with infection,

this is quite a satisfactory method. Less advisable it is to purchase from a market or a dogs' home; while those who from pity feel compelled to buy some waif offered for sale in the street are almost certain to be buying trouble.

Journals such as *Our Dogs* or the *Dog World* will be found most useful, as in them every breed of dog is advertised. Needless to say, however, no dog should be bought unseen.

In every case, whether a costly thoroughbred or a mongrel 'pal' is required, the best method is to see the puppy at home with its mother, and, if possible, with the rest of the litter. Careful observation of both mother and pups will give you valuable information as to future temperament. Some pups will come up to you in a bold and friendly manner; others may timidly watch from a distance, or perhaps run away. Avoid the nervous puppy; he may grow bolder as he develops, but this is not always so. Should the nervousness persist in the adult dog, there is little doubt he will be of unreliable temperament and, for children in particular, most undesirable.

When you have selected a likely youngster, before the final decision is made, he should be thoroughly inspected for skin trouble or other signs of ill-health which may not be apparent at first sight. The skin of a puppy should be clear, free from blemishes or any undue amount of scurf. The discovery of spots or sores should mean instant rejection of the pup. So, too, should sore eyes, and, of course, any abnormal growth or deformity of the bones. Unduly quiet behaviour should also be regarded with suspicion. Possibly the pup is just tired from a romp, but he may be unwell and sickening for dis temper.

Unless the new owner has considerable experience, it is not wise to purchase a puppy under seven or eight weeks of age, by which time he should be a friendly, sturdy little chap, bright-eyed and full of life. I recently read a story in which a young puppy was said to be 'one of the most pleasant of God's acts,' and that, I think, is as good a description as any.

Edwardian Dancing-Class

HELEN GLENDENNING

SOME time ago I was returning home from a visit to London and caught an evening train down into the West Country. The journey held no interest for me, as I had made it countless times, so that I was pleased when the daughter of my old friend, Mary Caxton, unexpectedly entered my compartment. We chatted amiably, and she told me all about herself with enthusiasm, for she had recently battled her way into the *corps de ballet* at Sadler's Wells as a professional dancer and was elated at her good fortune. When the pretty, slender creature left me, I continued on my journey, lost in meditation, which merged into a dream.

I had known Jennifer, Mary's daughter, since her babyhood. I remembered her as a child at Madame K.'s dancing-class, where the children were trained in both ballroom dancing and ballet. The teaching was more than efficient: it was brilliant. If a child showed any talent, that talent was fostered with purposeful care, to the end that the stuff from which ballerinas are made might emerge. Madame K. was very discerning. She had her own reputation to maintain.

Jennifer, at the age of nineteen, had gained a foothold in Sadler's Wells. From now on she would live in London, alone and independent, no opposition having been offered by her parents. Indeed, she had just told me they encouraged her and took pride in her success.

I wondered what Mary's mother and grandmother would have thought and felt had Mary suggested such a course of action for herself. We had both attended the same dancing-class in the middle of the Edwardian period. Knowing Mary's mother and grandmother (very 'nice' people indeed), I amused myself by imagining the fine dramatic scene which would undoubtedly have raged if Mary had, in those days, asked to be allowed to go

in for ballet, if ballet had been there for her to go into. Such a thing did not exist, however—at least not within the consciousness of the English upper middle-class—forty-five years ago; so Mary was saved from frustration and heartbreak.

My musing at this point became fixed and dreamlike. I was lost in the past. The landscape outside the carriage-windows advanced and receded; the telegraph-poles caught up their looped and singing wires in rhythmical jerks. My companions had become stuffed dummies; I saw them without looking, for my inward eye was watching myself at Mr Wilmot's dancing-class when I must have been about eight years old.

IT was Saturday morning. The class was from midday until two o'clock, and I was being given spongecake and milk before being taken by my mother to the old Assembly Rooms. It was raining, and a slightly despairing feeling came over me, for I should have to change in the cloakroom when we got there; I hated this, for it meant putting a cold, frilly white muslin frock over my precarious curls—curls as evanescent as they were unnatural. I did not like going all huddled up in rubber boots and mackintosh by tram. I detested having to miss my normal dinner-time and wait until after two o'clock for a meal; and no amount of milk and biscuits assuaged that sick, gnawing feeling in my small stomach.

There would be no help for it, however, so we would set off at half-past eleven and arrive at the old Assembly Rooms in time to change in the midst of dozens of chattering children, mothers, nurses, boxes, shoe-bags, brushes and combs. A faint exhilaration would steal over me, the tiresome business of

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the hair being dealt with and my black kid dancing-sandals (they might equally well have been bronze kid) adjusted. I was folded in a white silk shawl and led across the corridor into the great rooms where the class was held.

The old Assembly Rooms had been built in the 18th century. I did not, of course, know anything of architectural periods, but the lovely old room pleased and satisfied me even then, though I was not conscious of the perfect proportions and restrained decorations which gave it such dignity and charm. We entered the main room through a smaller anteroom with double-doors. When Mr Wilmot was ready to receive the second class of the day (I could hear him making ready to dismiss the first class), the doors opened to admit the throng of children. I loved this entrance. The main room looked so vast; the green and gold sofas, now in holland covers, ranged round the walls, gave an air of ease and richness, and the shining, honey-coloured floor, spread out before me, was a lake reflecting the pale-grey light from the windows above. The chandeliers thrilled me more than anything else. There were three enormous crystal clusters suspended from the moulded ceiling, the largest in the very centre. In the daylight they glinted coldly steel and silver, while fugitive rainbows trembled and vanished in their glassy depths, and I longed passionately to see them all alight.

Under the masses of crystal and over the floor the children would swarm towards Mr Wilmot, while all the mothers and nurses would settle themselves on the sofas to knit, whisper together, and watch the lesson. Mr Wilmot soon reduced us to silence and order. The little boys had to sit on red-velvet benches down one side of the room and the little girls on the opposite side. At the far end, farthest from the entrance, was the piano, with a curly-headed man who played for the dancing. In the centre of the room stood the wonderful and exquisite Mr Wilmot, ready to begin another two hours of concentrated teaching, having already taken one class from ten o'clock until midday. He would take yet another class from two until four, if I remember rightly, never relaxing or flagging in the slightest degree.

MR WILMOT was like a dainty Lord Kitchener; his hair was smooth and grey, his eyes were grey, and so was his

moustache. He wore a beautifully-tailored grey frock-coat and trousers, a grey silk cravat, snowy-white linen, a white handkerchief in his breast-pocket. His elegant feet were encased in black patent-leather buttoned-boots, with grey suede tops, and his gloves were of lavender kid. The gloves he used to put on slowly and stroke them on his hands with extreme care. Never have I seen anyone so well groomed.

Mr Wilmot was a man with a mission, which I am sure he held sacred in his secret mind—this was to change us all from clumsy little creatures into young ladies and gentlemen with perfect manners, able to deport ourselves on all occasions with grace and dignity. His manner towards us all was that of a grand seigneur. His first gesture was to say: 'Good morning, ladies!', 'Good morning, gentlemen!', bowing to right and left. The little girls would rise and curtsy, the little boys, hands on their hearts, would bow. 'Good morning, Mr Wilmot,' came the response, sung out in our childish trebles. After this, the lesson in deportment began.

The little girls lined up down the centre of the room. 'Now, ladies, take your skirts,' Mr Wilmot would say, and place himself in front of us. 'Point the right toe—the *right* toe and walk—like this.' He would pace before us, gliding lightly, his head inclined over his shoulder to see what we were up to. With infinite patience each child was taught to walk properly, then to curtsy, and finally we sat down.

The little boys went through the same drilling, bows being substituted for curtsies. Then they were instructed how to request the honour of a dance from the little girls. Each boy crossed the room and bowed low before his partner, and murmured: 'May I have the pleasure?' The girl would rise, curtsy, and extend a hand, with which she was to be led away to dance. The return journey was then practised. Each little girl was led back to her seat, she curtsied again, sat down, and the partner bowed his thanks and walked 'properly' across the room. How Mr Wilmot curbed those little devils in Eton suits and kilts, and how he made them go through this drill with such docility, is now a mystery to me. I know if my cousin happened to land opposite me, he would squint horribly, and the tip of his tongue would dart from between his lips; but his back view would express admiration and homage.

EDWARDIAN DANCING-CLASS

THE next stage was the first step in dancing, changing from one foot to the other. The right toe pointed forward, with the weight on the ball of the left foot, skirts held elegantly at full stretch. Then the right foot drew back to take the weight and the left foot flew out behind us—forward, back, forward, back.

'Change at eight,' Mr Wilmot chanted. 'Ladies, change at eight,' and on the eighth beat the left foot came forward and the right foot flew back.

'Heads up, ladies; watch me, keep your eyes upon me, if you please.'

If a child found this complicated step too difficult, Mr Wilmot took her alone by his side, and the curly-headed man at the piano would gently strike a note, keeping time with the uncertain feet until, with greater confidence, they moved more rhythmically. Then he would creep in with the tune as softly as a whisper, until the child would find herself dancing the step without knowing why.

Throughout the winter months the dancing-class was held every week. We learned the polka, the waltz, the lancers (how I loved the grand chain with the noble chord: 'Tar-rum!'). There were various square dances and, chief glory of all, the foursome and eightsome reels. These were danced with precision, every traditional movement meticulously observed. I do not remember any dance approaching ballet in any sense, but I was in the beginners' class. The older ones of the 'two to four' class blossomed into something more exotic.

THE whole winter was a preparation for the culminating point of the dancing season—the Grand Matinee. Parents were bidden to attend this ceremony to observe the progress made by their children. All the pupils from the youngest, of whom I was one, to the oldest were invited. It was a very grand and very important function. Detailed arrangements began some weeks beforehand. At the class we were told which dances we were to take part in. The little children were relegated to the square dances, the lancers, the reels, and possibly the barn dance. The older pupils displayed themselves in groups of two or three. They performed scarf dances, flower dances, and fan dances—'choreography' presumably by Mr Wilmot. The boys were given Highland flings, hornpipes, and, very daringly, sword dances.

These were practised zealously. Mr Wilmot's mounting but controlled excitement communicated itself mysteriously to every pupil.

I remember the first thing to be considered was my toilette. We all had to appear *en grande tenue*, which meant new frock, new gloves, new stockings and sandals: nothing less would do. On the particular occasion I am thinking of, my dress was made by my aunt, who had a mild genius for dressmaking. Her creation was soft white chiffon, exquisitely gathered and tucked, with enormous full sleeves drawn into a band just below the elbow, a waist resting on the hips, and a short full skirt. The belt was white satin, with large rosettes at each side. With this I wore a deep Irish-lace collar, fastened with a gold and pearl brooch. Underneath were two cambric petticoats, both with little bodices, one plain with tucks and the top one very splendid with more tucks and a real lace edge and insertion threaded with white satin ribbon. The knickers, or drawers, as they were called, were, of course, deeply frilled and made of fine cambric, and were fastened to a stiff bodice fore and aft. My mother had apparently never thought of elastic for the purpose of securing these garments round the waist. All the little girls I knew suffered from this complicated buttoning business ('Your drawers are coming down, dear!'). Later, when I finally arrived at the Assembly Rooms, I was asked in a guarded voice if I wanted 'to go somewhere.' It took the united efforts of mother and myself to negotiate all these frills and buttons—a real embarrassment to a child if confronted with the affair unaided. The stiff bodice was quite firm, and I hated it. I suppose it was almost a light corset. Beneath all this flummery good thick woollen combinations were worn, and they tickled abominably.

THE night before the Grand Matinee my hair, aggressively fine and straight, was damped and tied up in rags, which were a misery in bed, but they remained on my head all the next day until the last minute before leaving the house. Then my 'curls' were released and my hair brushed into ringlets round my nurse's finger and caught up with a slide on which a white satin bow had been tied. I knew only too well that by the end of the evening the slide would vanish and the ringlets would have become attenuated cork-

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screws; nevertheless, I was highly gratified by my appearance when they were newly brushed. White silk stockings with open-work fronts, slender white satin sandals fastened by crossing elastic round the ankle, and scrunchy long white gloves completed this surprising toilette. Not quite completed, for the crowning glory was yet to be added.

At the daringly late hour of 7.15, after my mother and father had arrayed themselves in full evening-dress, I was wrapped in shawls and a red cloak with a hood. We then picked our way delicately down the path of the terrace house in which we lived to grandfather's brougham, which was waiting for us at the gate. Hudson, the coachman, had 'coam at the qua-a-r-r-ter' as he had promised in his comfortable Yorkshire voice. I was lifted into the carriage in a state of ecstasy. The brougham silently rolled away, the lamps faintly gleaming, the muffled clapping of the horse's hooves keeping time with the suffocating beat of my heart.

Halfway down the town we drew up at a florist's, and my bouquet was handed in through the dark window. Lilies-of-the-valley, white rosebuds, and maidenhair fern were clasped in silver paper and tied with a large bow of white satin. Holding this fragrance with enraptured care, I then came to rest upon the topmost pinnacle of anticipation, that trembling point where beginning and ending meet. All through life I have at times relived this intensity of emotion and have returned in spirit to the moment when my bouquet of flowers appeared glimmering palely, scented, in the soft light of the carriage-lamps.

THE arrival at the Assembly Rooms was dignified. The carriages and cabs slowed down before the red-carpeted portico. Father helped mother out and lifted me down, Hudson was bidden to return at nine o'clock, and we joined the crowd, making our way slowly up the gracious shallow staircase.

In the cloakroom my layers of shawls were unpeeled, and my skirts and frills pulled and shaken. I was smoothed and patted, brushed and arranged, sandal soles scratched with mother's scissors to prevent slipping. My hair was given a final polish with a silk handkerchief, my bouquet restored to my keeping. Catching sight of myself in the long cheval-glass, I gazed at my skinny little figure, hardly

able to believe that the ravishing apparition reflected therein was me.

The waiting guests in the anteroom were in the highest state of excitement. The grown-ups had their work cut out to keep their wriggling, hopping children in control. The little boys were all in Eton suits, or the full Highland costume which was permitted in certain families; the girls were all in white, with bouquets of flowers. With the opening of the double-doors I entered into Paradise.

I was bemused with the lights, the crowd, the curls, the long shining hair, the soft glowing faces, the fairylike dresses, the all-pervading scent of flowers, white and green, gold and pink, the laughter, the high, sweet voices of children.

The noble old room was transformed. Fires leapt in the Adam steel grates, the green-and-gold couches had doffed their holland covers, there were plants and flowering shrubs in pots about the piano and doorways. Above all, bewitching, lovely, the three great chandeliers blazed with golden points of flame reflected in thousands of shimmering crystal pendants; beneath them the floor lay, a pool of light and shadow, waiting to bear upon its surface the flowerlike children who, awed by this magnificence, gently drifted towards the slender figure of Mr Wilmot.

There he stood, no longer elegant in grey, but more elegant in black. Compared to the fathers present in their evening-suits his toilette was a work of art. His 'tails' were better cut, his white waistcoat whiter, his shirt-front more gleaming, his tie more significant. He wore a large, but not too large, white carnation in his buttonhole. He received his guests like royalty, every name came to his lips without hesitation. He was gracious, courtly, immensely dignified. He contrived to make everyone in that room feel that they were blessed above all other human beings in having him there at all, while to the parents, especially, he conveyed a sense of privilege that he condescended to teach their children the art of dancing.

Having greeted everyone, he took his place at the end of the room and spoke to the pianist. The grown-ups settled themselves around, resting easily on the couches. Some children went quietly to their accustomed seats on the benches, while the rest arranged themselves for a set of lancers, and, with the first majestic chord from the piano, the Grand Matinee began.

Naming Famous Novels

W. M. PARKER

THE christening of a novel requires as much care and deliberation as the naming of a child. A novel, however, may receive its name before, during, or after birth, whereas the child is born before it is christened. The value of a title can be viewed from several angles. There is the commercial aspect, such as is stated by a bookseller's journeyman in one of Chatterton's poems, who declares:

*The author who invents a title well
Will always find his covered dulness sell.*

Again, a title has often a psychological effect upon the mind of a prospective reader. It may arouse curiosity when it is one which conveys little or no idea of the nature of the story; it may impress itself on account of its definite statement of what we may expect to follow; or it may captivate by the sound of its words and syllables. It would be interesting to know how many readable novels have been passed over because their authors did not take trouble over a choice of title.

When Sir Walter Scott was working at *Redgauntlet*, the novel had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to change the title from 'Herries' to 'Redgauntlet.' In that year, 1824, Scott wrote to James Ballantyne: 'I think your name of Redgauntlet is excellent. One fault it may have—that of inducing people to think the work is a tale of Chivalry—and disappointment is a bad thing. Otherwise the name is a great hit.' One wonders if this novel would have met with a less cool reception than it did meet with had Scott's original title of 'Herries' remained.

At one time or another some novelists have wished with Falstaff, 'I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought,' and it was when in such a predicament that Scott chanced to remember an old rhyme, which ran:

*Tring, Wing, and Ivanhoe,
For striking of a blow,
Hampden did forego,
And glad he could escape so.*

The name 'Ivanhoe' attracted him for two reasons. He liked it for its ancient English sound, and also because, disliking to write up to a name, 'Ivanhoe' gave no indication of the story's trend. So *Ivanhoe* was christened.

A curious suggestion was made by Constable when Scott was well on his way towards the completion of *The Abbot*. For some unaccountable reason, Constable recommended that the title should be changed to 'The Nunnery.' Scott, however, did not favour the proposition, as is shown in the letter he sent to Constable on 7th March 1820. 'The only objection I know to your proposal (if it be an objection) is that there is neither Nun nor Nunnery mentioned in the affair from beginning to end.' In this instance Scott did not yield and 'The Abbot' was retained.

Commercially, the essentials of a good title are that it should arrest attention and whet the appetite; and it is this commercial importance of the title that has given publishers a claim to have a word in the choice, and they have sometimes intervened with effect. The occasion of *The Abbot* was not the only time that Constable set up as 'Mr Sponsor' for Scott. Constable's business instinct made him suggest the excellent title of 'Rob Roy,' though he had great difficulty in persuading the novelist to adopt it. 'What,' said Scott, 'Mr Accoucheur, must you be setting up for Mr Sponsor too!' But Constable firmly maintained that the hero's name would be the best name for the book, and so *Rob Roy* it was called. Then, when Scott took up the subject of Queen Elizabeth, Constable was ready with a title, 'The Armada,' surely one that told nothing! Scott himself, however,

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meant to call the novel 'Cumnor Hall,' after the ballad of that name, but again Constable intervened and proposed 'Kenilworth.' To this James Ballantyne demurred, and prophesied, with bad judgment and a worse pun, that the result would be something 'worthy of the kennel.' Scott eventually fell in with Constable's suggestion, and the novel appeared as *Kenilworth*. By now the publisher's vanity so increased at having his suggestion again approved that he used to walk up and down his room, exclaiming: 'By God, I am all but the author of the Waverley Novels!' Indeed, nearly all Scott's titles arouse curiosity; they are distinctive, appropriate, come trippingly off the tongue, sound well, and have a romantic touch about them.

TWO of Jane Austen's novels which have double-barrelled, alliterative titles underwent changes of name. Her first-written work, *Pride and Prejudice*, was originally called 'First Impressions,' which would, perhaps, have been the better title, as it at least indicates the key of the story, whereas 'Pride and Prejudice' is somewhat of a puzzle until one has read the novel. The earlier form of *Sense and Sensibility* bore the title of 'Elinor and Marianne,' the names of the two chief women characters. But when the novel was recast and completely revised, it came out as *Sense and Sensibility*. In giving her first works the attraction of an alliterative title, Jane Austen was following the fashion of the old morality plays by substituting the distinctive characteristics of her chief personages for their names. Henceforth, however, she dropped the alliterative convention.

Next in succession of composition was her *Northanger Abbey*. This novel was subjected to three christenings. The first draft was entitled 'Susan,' and it still had that name when it was completed and sold to the publishers, but, on being bought back from the publishers, the title was transformed to 'Catherine,' the Christian name of the heroine. Eventually, it appeared posthumously in 1818 under its present title.

When Thackeray offered the manuscript of *Vanity Fair* to Colburn for the *New Monthly Magazine* he had drafted only a few chapters of the story, which, at that stage, was called 'Pencil Sketches of English Society.' Then, quite suddenly, in the middle of the night, the wonderful name occurred to him. He was

elated beyond measure. 'I jumped out of bed,' he told Miss Perry, 'and ran three times round my room, uttering as I went, "Vanity Fair," "Vanity Fair," "Vanity Fair"!'

WITH Dickens a title was of paramount importance, the first necessity, the originating impulse. Until he fixed on his title he could not set himself seriously to work. Never, perhaps, did he experience such protracted preliminary throes as when embarking on *David Copperfield*. 'My mind running high like a high sea on names—not satisfied yet, though,' he remarked. Soon he found a tentative title, 'Mag's Diversions, Being the Personal History of Mr Thomas Mag the Younger of Blunderstone House.' Then came a variation, 'Copperfield House' being substituted for 'Blunderstone House,' after which there followed 'The Personal History of Mr David Copperfield the Younger and his Aunt Margaret.'

But the fastidious Dickens was not yet satisfied. To his friend and future biographer, John Forster, he wrote on 26th February 1849: 'I wish you would look over carefully the titles now enclosed, and tell me to which you most incline. You will see that they give up Mag altogether, and refer exclusively to one name—that which I last sent you. I doubt whether I could, on the whole, get a better name. 1. The Copperfield Disclosures. Being the personal history, experience, and observation, of Mr David Copperfield the Younger, of Blunderstone House. 2. The Copperfield Records. Being ditto, of Copperfield Cottage. 3. The Last Living Speech and Confession of David Copperfield, Junior, of Blunderstone Lodge, who was never executed at the Old Bailey. Being his personal history found among his papers. 4. The Copperfield Survey of the World as it Rolled. Being the personal history, experience, and observation of David Copperfield the Younger, of Blunderstone Rookery. 5. The Last Will and Testament of Mr David Copperfield. Being his personal history left as a legacy. 6. Copperfield, Complete. Being the whole personal history and experience of Mr David Copperfield of Blunderstone House, which he never meant to be published on any account. Or, the opening words of No. 6 might be 'Copperfield's Entire'; and 'The Copperfield Confessions' might open Nos. 1 and 2. Now, WHAT SAY YOU?'

NAMING FAMOUS NOVELS

Dickens decided on *Martin Chuzzlewit* only after much deliberation and change of titles. Martin prefixed them all, but the surname varied from 'Sweezleden,' 'Sweezleback,' and 'Sweezlewig' to 'Chuzzletoe,' 'Chuzzleboy,' 'Chubblewig,' and 'Chuzzlewig.' Indeed, 'Chuzzlewit' was not arrived at until after more hesitation and discussion. Four numbers of *Little Dorrit* had been written, of which the first was on the eve of appearance, before the title was altered from its original form, 'Nobody's Fault.'

The twelve titles successively proposed for *Bleak House* were: 1. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Ruined House.' 2. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Solitary House that was always shut up.' 3. 'Bleak House Academy.' 4. 'The East Wind.' 5. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Ruined [House, Building, Factory, Mill] that got into Chancery and never got out.' 6. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Solitary House where the Grass grew.' 7. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Solitary House that was always shut up and never lighted.' 8. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Ruined Mill that got into Chancery and never got out.' 9. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Solitary House where the Wind howled.' 10. 'Tom-all-Alone's. The Ruined House that got into Chancery and never got out.' 11. 'Bleak House and the East Wind. How they both got into Chancery and never got out.' 12. 'Bleak House.'

There were fourteen tentative titles for *Hard Times*. These were submitted to Forster on 20th January 1854. 'I wish you would look at the enclosed titles for the *Household Words* story. . . . It seems to me that there are three very good ones among them. . . .

1. According to Cocker. 2. Prove It. 3. Stubborn Things. 4. Mr Gradgrind's Facts. 5. The Grindstone. 6. Hard Times. 7. Two and Two are Four. 8. Something Tangible. 9. Our Hardheaded Friend. 10. Rust and Dust. 11. Simple Arithmetic. 12. A Matter of Calculation. 13. A Mere Question of Figures. 14. The Gradgrind Philosophy.'

Barnaby Rudge was originally named 'Gabriel Vardon, the Locksmith of London.' As for *A Tale of Two Cities*, these were the early proposed titles: 'Time!', 'The Leaves of the Forest,' 'Scattered Leaves,' 'The Great Wheel,' 'Round and Round,' 'Old Leaves,' 'Long Ago,' 'Far Apart,' 'Fallen Leaves,' 'Five and Twenty Years,' 'Years and Years,' 'Rolling Years,' 'Day after Day,'

'Felled Trees,' 'Memory Carton,' 'Rolling Stones,' 'Two Generations.'

When Dickens was in Genoa in 1844 he had a Christmas story to write. The subject was there, but he could not hit on a title for it. Then, sitting down one morning to grapple with the tale, he heard a 'maddening' peal of chimes from the city bells. It gave him the idea. Two days later he wrote a letter of only one sentence to Forster: 'We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.' Later still, he wrote: 'It is a great thing to have my title and see my way how to work the bells.' Thus *The Chimes* received its christening. After endless doubts, suggestions, siftings, and rejections of titles, suddenly one came to him, and he was off on the composition of the tale.

As an example of Dickens's wonderful inventiveness in names, here are a few amusing items from a list of titles he prepared for imitation book-backs. 'Forty Winks at the Pyramids,' 'A Carpenter's Bench of Bishops,' 'History of the Middling Ages,' 'Kant's Ancient Humbugs,' 'Bowwowdom: A Poem,' 'The Quarrelly Review,' 'Drowsy's Recollections of Nothing,' 'Growler's Gruffiology,' 'Burke (of Edinburgh) on the Sublime and Beautiful,' 'Hansard's Guide to Refreshing Sleep.'

It was to John Blackwood, her publisher, that George Eliot was indebted for the title of *The Mill on the Floss*, although, as the novelist pointed out, the name was geographically inaccurate. At first, George Eliot had chosen 'Maggie' or 'Sister Maggie.' Then, on 3rd January 1860, she wrote to Blackwood: 'We are demurring about the title—Mr Lewes is beginning to prefer "The House of Tulliver, or Life on the Floss" to our old notion of "Sister Maggie." It has the advantage of slipping easily off the lazy English tongue, but it is after too common a fashion (*The Newcomes*, *The Bertrams*, &c., &c., &c.). Then, there is "The Tulliver Family, or Life on the Floss." Pray meditate & give us your opinion.' On 6th January she wrote: "'The Mill on the Floss" be it then! The only objections are, that the Mill is not *strictly* on the Floss, being on its small tributary, & that the title is of rather laborious utterance. But I think these objections do not deprive it of its advantage over "The Tullivers, or Life on the Floss"—the only alternative,

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so far as we can see. Pray give the casting vote.' And finally, on 12th January: 'Thank you for letting me see the specimen Advertisements, they have helped us to come to a decision, namely, for "The Mill on the Floss." The disadvantage of titles with several words in them is that in small advertisements they are apt to be divided—running on to the second line. But this is not so very long after all, & I suppose that mischance can be avoided by sufficient care.' George Eliot's practical argument may explain the fact that all her later novels bear short titles.

One very famous book, namely *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, received two provisional titles before the final choice was made. In his Diary Lewis Carroll recorded a picnic on the river at Oxford in 1862, with 'the three Liddells,' on which occasion he entered: 'I told them the fairy-tale of "Alice's Adventures Underground," which I undertook to write out for Alice.' Later, the narrative became 'Alice's Hour in Elfland,' and it was not until 1864 that Carroll finally decided that the title should be 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.' In fact, a facsimile of the original manuscript book was published in 1886 with the title 'Alice's Adventures Under Ground.' Incidentally, in his preface to that publication Carroll quotes a 'deliciously naive remark of a very dear child-friend, whom I asked, after an acquaintance of two or three days, if she had read "Alice" and the "Looking-Glass." "Oh yes," she replied readily, "I've read both of them! And I think" (this more slowly and thoughtfully) "I think "Through the Looking-Glass" is more stupid than "Alice's Adventures." Don't you think so?"'

LORD LYTTON has been credited with introducing the fashion of using an interrogative sentence for a title, such as his own *What will he do with it?* Trollope resorted to this several times, for instance, *Is He Popenjoy?* and *Can You Forgive Her?*

Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* has one of the most satisfying titles. It tells nothing, yet it tells everything. It fascinates before the book is opened; it fascinates more than ever after the book is finished. The whole tragedy of the subject is in this perfect title. Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* was so called when issued in America, but in its English form it appeared as *Transformation*.

Meredith seldom found it necessary to alter his titles. *Emilia in England* became better known by its later title of *Sandra Belloni*, and *Rhoda Fleming*, in its early stages, was changed from 'A Woman's Battle' to 'The Dyke Farm.' When Meredith's *The Amazing Marriage* and Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* were published about the same time, a wit of the day thought that, as indicative of the nature of the two novels, the titles should have been transformed into 'The Obscure Marriage' and 'The Amazing Jude.' During its serialisation, Hardy's novel was first called 'The Simpletons,' but that name aroused immediate comment because it resembled Charles Reade's *A Simpleton*. Accordingly, in the further instalments of the serial the name was changed to 'Hearts Insurgent,' a style of title Kipling used in *Captains Courageous*. In book form the novel was christened *Jude the Obscure*. That last title once occasioned a witticism. Edward Clodd recalls a drive from Aldeburgh to Framlingham when Professor Flinders Petrie and Thomas Hardy were of the party. Arriving at the 'Crown and Castle,' they found it was faced by a large shop, bearing in bold gilt letters GEORGE JUDE three times. 'Well,' said Petrie to Hardy, 'you wouldn't call that Jude the Obscure.'

Although in *Treasure Island* there is no mention of a sea-cook until chapter viii, whereas there is a reference to Treasure Island in the opening sentence, Stevenson entitled his manuscript 'The Sea Cook.' When James Henderson, editor and proprietor of *Young Folks*, accepted the story for serial publication in that journal, he did not hesitate to alter the title to 'Treasure Island,' even at the cost of vexing Stevenson. However, while the tale was being prepared for publication in book form, 'The Sea Cook' was still retained as the title, or heading, of Part II.

SWINBURNE used to protest that it should be a penal offence against literature for any writer to affix a proverb, a quotation, or even a line of poetry, by way of title to a novel, and he considered *It is Never Too Late to Mend* and *Red as a Rose is She* were very silly labels. Still, some of the most popular and effective titles have been from poems or proverbs, notably Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch complained about novelists choosing 'loose, woolly, unde-

scriptive titles,' and cited as such Kipling's *Traffics and Discoveries*, *Life's Handicap*, *Many Inventions*, and *The Day's Work*. 'What is wrong,' he added, 'with *Don Quixote*, *Tom Jones*, *David Copperfield*? What is right with *The Eternal Mystery*, *Some Emotions and a Moral*, and so on? Are they not all too loose for their contents? And what is wrong again with the house—*The House of the Seven Gables*, *Bleak House*, *The House with the Green Shutters*?'

Contrast plays a large part in novel titles. For instance, what could be more simple than George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, or what more comfortable and reassuring than J. B. Priestley's *The Good Companions*, and what more clumsy than H. G. Wells's *Mr Britling Sees It Through*? Some title contrasts afford an

amusing literary diversion. There are contrasts of colour: *The Green Carnation* (Hichens) and *The Black Tulip* (Dumas fils); of class, degree, or position in life, as *The Judge* (Rebecca West) and *The Prisoner of Zenda* (Anthony Hope), *The Human Boy* (Phillpotts) and *The Heavenly Twins* (Sarah Grand); or of relationship, as *Her Son* (Vachell) and *Lady Rose's Daughter* (Mrs Humphry Ward), *Wives and Daughters* (Mrs Gaskell) and *Sons and Lovers* (D. H. Lawrence).

Some early novelists favoured very long titles, and it is difficult to determine which of them takes up the most space, but it is doubtful if any novel, old or modern, has as brief a title as that which designates one of Hilaire Belloc's collections of essays, the monosyllabic *On*.

Top-Hats

LAURENCE WILD

IT has been truly said that of the many well-known hats which have achieved distinction down the centuries few can compete with the topper. In its heyday it was common to rich and poor. And in spite of its often sombre appearance, and the fact that it gave little shade from the sun, golfers, cricketers, and oarsmen wore it for several decades. Farmers thought it fit and proper to wear with a smock-frock. In the hunting-field it has prevented many a broken neck. It has been worn in battle. It has even caused a riot, and when tossed inside the ropes the top-hat was the symbol of a challenge in the days of the old English prize-ring.

THE topper was born towards the end of the 18th century at a period when the English country-gentleman's love for horses and hunting was causing a distinct change in

dress. At that time the long, full-skirted coat was found to be inconvenient for riding. As a consequence, the skirt was cut away in front from the waist, to turn the garment into a tail-coat. Shoes and stockings were changed for practical top-boots, and the hitherto fashionable tricorne, or three-cornered cocked-hat, had its brim reduced in width, and its crown raised and stiffened to make it act as a kind of crash-helmet to help prevent a broken neck when the wearer took a toss in the hunting-field. These tall hunting toppers of the late 18th century were fitted with an inner band threaded with a draw-string which could be pulled tight to make the hat fit comfortably. This draw-string remains in the silk hunting toppers of to-day.

Thus the topper, destined to reign supreme for more than a century, started on its way. At first the best toppers were made from beaver fur laid over a felted lamb's-wool

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body. The few hatters who learned the art of making beaver hats were in great demand, as it called for considerable skill to twang the hatter's bow and make the string vibrate among loose fur fibres which were thus whirled into the hat body. It was even more difficult to ensure that the overlay of fur fibres felted themselves into the body deep enough to hold firmly, but not deep enough to be lost in the felted lamb's-wool. Sometimes the beaver topper was brushed up to give a rough effect. At other times the fur was smoothed down to give the hat a silky sheen like the present-day silk hat. According to record, it was one of these tall beaver top-hats which, because of a scalp wound, was worn instead of his military cocked-hat by General Sir Thomas Picton in the fighting before he was killed at the Battle of Waterloo.

WHO invented the silk topper seems to be anyone's guess, but there's no doubt that its appearance created a stir in London, for one morning, during the early 1800's, the sudden scream of a frightened child startled pedestrians in one of the city streets. Then passers-by rushed to the aid of a fainting woman. Two law-officers proceeded to investigate. Gasps of astonishment came from the onlookers, and nervous folk edged away as the officers arrested the man who had occasioned the commotion. Next day *The Times* reported that the arrested man was John Hetherington, a Strand hatter, who was charged before the Lord Mayor for causing a breach of the peace and inciting a riot by wearing, while walking on the public highway, what he called a silk hat, and what the law called 'a tall structure having a shining lustre and calculated to frighten timid people.'

Nevertheless, despite its unfortunate debut, the black silk topper held its own with the tall napped beaver, and before long became so fashionable that almost everyone who could buy a hat wore a silk hat. In the words of a writer of the day, there was 'something grand and dignified' about the black silk hat. Light-coloured toppers in fawn, grey, or white were also worn, but they were made of cloth or felt. Prince Albert's liking for the black silk hat ensured its extreme popularity, and once established it became, in company with the frockcoat, the hallmark of respectability, and the most dominating

male hat of the 19th century. Of course, fashion decreed that height of crown and curl of brim should alter year by year. The crown started off almost six inches high. When it went up to seven inches it was nicknamed the 'stovepipe'; another half-an-inch and it became the 'chimney-pot'; and a further eighth-of-an-inch made it the 'kite high dandy.'

DURING its reign the black silk topper became the subject of many an amusing story. One of the best concerns King Edward VII, who, although he sometimes wore unconventional clothes, could be very strict in matters sartorial when the occasion demanded. The story goes that he once met the late Lord Harris in the Royal Enclosure at Ascot and noticed that his lordship, in defiance of convention, was wearing a bowler instead of the correct topper. "Morning, Harris," said His Majesty. "Go'in' rattin'?"

The hat has, of course, always played an important part in the life of the House of Commons, and at one time any M.P. who dared to wear any other hat but a silk topper could be certain of sharp criticism. Once Keir Hardie, first Socialist M.P., caused a great sensation in the chamber by appearing in a deer-stalker cap. It was a sheer mischance, and not an act of defiance as some members thought, but before an explanation could be given a shocked M.P. cried out: 'I suppose, Mr Hardie, you know there are two kinds of fops in the world—the one who overdresses, and the one who underdresses.'

Another silk-hat story from the House of Commons concerns Will Crooks, who was in the chamber when Sir F. Banbury, a well-known obstructionist of the day, had been deliberately blocking legislation by making a long speech in order to talk out a measure. When he finished speaking, he sat down—on his silk hat. Amid a roar of laughter Crooks shouted: 'Now block that one, sir!'

For well after the advent of less dignified hats many M.P.s remained faithful to the black silk topper. In fact, as late as 1935 a small group tried to revive the use of silk hats in the chamber. The group was called the Top Hat Club. One of its keenest members was Sir William Y. Darling, who still, on occasions, upholds the tradition of the past by wearing a black silk top-hat at Westminster.

Half-Rotten Half-Cotton

RICHARD J. DAVIES

'IT was in Bombay we picked him up,' said the young sun-tanned sailor. 'He was a native of Portuguese Goa, and as filthy a Boy as you ever clapped eyes on. But that's your India! Don't expect 'em clean! This fellow said he kept a coconut farm 'way down in Managoa.

"Coconut farm!" I exclaimed. "How many trees have you got?"

"One, sa'ib," he replied.

"One!" I echoed, "and you call it a coconut farm?"

"Las' year I 'ave six coconuts"—and he counted 'em out on his fingers—"this year I 'ave seven coconuts, nex' year I 'ave eight coconuts, mebbe!"

I laughed at him, and took hold of the bit of paper he held out to me. They all come aboard with references, from other ships, or written by some professional scribe. It is easy to tell from which source they come. If from the first, it would, obviously, be the truth; if from the second, more obviously, all fiction. Since most of these Boys can't read English it doesn't matter much which they peddle.

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Forty nex' birthday," he replied.

"Married?"

"Yass, sa'ib, one, two, t'ree children!"—he counted 'em out again on his fingers.

I read the paper.

"Oh boy, this is a good reference," I leg-pulled. But he didn't understand sarcasm, so he merely grinned, showing a lot of dirty red teeth where he had been chewing betel-nut.

The reference read like this:

"To whom it may concern, in disfavour of the bearer, Half-Rotten Half-Cotton. He is a worthy disciple of that much-vaunting prevaricator, Ananias, has sat long at the

shrine of Bill Sikes, and he who employs him deserves all he gets.

(Signed) ONE WHO KNOWS."

'That tore it. I didn't want him. The engineer had had a bad time not long before. He had merely warned his Boy to bring his shaving-water hot, and on the last day of the trip he had found all his silk shirts and underwear torn to ribbons and the black devil decamped.

"No, thank you," I said, "I don't want a Boy." As a matter of fact, I did want one, but we were to be in Bombay three or four days, and I knew I would be able to get another with less lurid credentials.

The fellow uttered not a word, and I went ashore, hoping he wouldn't follow me. His sort are usually hard to get rid of.

WHEN I got back, the Old Man announced we should have to weigh anchor straightaway. He had been up to the shipping-office, and found a cablegram. Our cargo had been resold to a firm in Singapore, and we would not be staying in Bombay our coveted three days.

"But we're a Boy short," I reminded him.

"Oh, that's all right!" replied the Old Man. "I engaged a Boy for you. He's not a very attractive-looking object, and had no reference, but I hadn't much selection. You'll find him all right, I expect. At least, you won't have to shave yourself, and cut your own hair."

I wondered what was in store for me, but comforted myself with the thought that at least this Boy couldn't be worse than the one I had rejected, so I entered my cabin rather philosophical about the whole business. But, of course, you can quite easily

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guess who it was—Half-Rotten Half-Cotton! "The Cap'n 'e engage me," he intimated calmly.

"So I see," I said, held up in my stride. "Did you show him the paper?"

"Paper, 'im fall in water," he lied. "I'm great loss, but Cap'n 'im ver' kind man sa'ib."

"Ah, just my luck!" I bewailed. "Well, be a good Boy, and you'll be treated so. Perhaps there'll be a present for you at the end of the voyage."

THE Boys are not too well paid, and it is good to make an occasional gift—keeps them from being light-fingered. Any discarded garment! A white man must keep caste in the eyes of the native. He daren't wear anything soiled, or he would be done for. The natives would lose all respect for him, you understand.

But Half-Rotten was capable of making his own presents. The next day he came to me with a new shirt which had only been laundered once. "Look, Sa'ib!" he said.

"Sure enough, there was an almost invisible hole in the tail of the shirt. "Oh, that's nothing!" I remarked. "That's all right. That was there before."

He said nothing, but took the shirt away again. I had an uneasy feeling that he had put the hole there.

He laid out the shirt for me the next day, and I wore it. But the following morning, after he had brought me my tea, I happened to turn my head towards him. He was standing holding my shirt in his hands, and examining it. "Look, Sa'ib!" he cried. "Ole, 'im grow bigger."

I looked. Sure enough, the hole was much bigger, big enough to destroy caste. "All right, you may have it," I told him. "Bring another one."

He took my shirt away, and wore it himself, and the same thing happened to nearly all my togs. He had practically a whole outfit, and several changes. Oh no, I couldn't catch him at it! He was too subtle for that. If I could have caught him, I'd have hauled him before the Captain.

ONE night I was going over the problem in my bunk, when I suddenly realised that I had let my pipe go out with my thoughts. I leaned over to my jacket, and felt in the

pocket for my pouch. The pouch was empty. I had several ounces in one of the lockers, so I jerked out of bed, and padded over for one. Back in bed, I was about to transfer the baccy to my pouch, when I suddenly found the whole thing collapse in my hand. It was half-empty. I was surprised. Then a thought came to me. I scrutinised the packet carefully. It was a dark packet, and I found in the twisted folds a small hole. By the manipulation of a bent pin, the tobacco must have been extracted, strand by strand. Oh yes, their minds are as tortuous as their fingers are nimble. I leaped out of bed, and went to examine the other ounces of baccy. Funnily enough, in the dark, I had taken out one of the back bundles. The front bundles, those I should normally have used first, were all intact, but three or four at the back of the pile were half-empty.

It was no good going to the Old Man about it. He would have disbelieved the whole business, claiming that the packets had been sold half-full. No, I had to catch my man at it. I didn't succeed until the return journey, when we were only a day out from Bombay. I caught the beggar red-handed. He tried to protest, but I hauled him up before the Old Man, and told him the story; also about the reference which had unfortunately been lost in the sea. The Old Man was sympathetic. "He'll be fired to-morrow!" he declared. "Sorry and all that, Sparks. Why didn't you tell me?"

"Oh, I thought I'd give him a chance," I answered. "Besides, Eastern life spoils you for doing things for yourself."

Well, this Half-Rotten Half-Cotton brought me my tea next morning in Bombay harbour. I shaved myself. I wasn't going to have him wagging a razor round my throat that morning. He was sullen and resentful. He hung around, hoping to get the money he had been promised, but he had had so much out of me, and had been such an indifferent servant, that I did not feel justified in giving him anything. The Captain paid him off and told him he wouldn't be wanted again. I saw him go, and was relieved.

For two or three days we loaded cargo, monkeys and snakes and gorgeously-plumed birds in cages, for experimental purposes in New York—a mixed cargo, you understand. I was kept busy, with one thing and another, and forgot all about Half-Rotten Half-Cotton.

'However, we were just slipping from the quay, and I was leaning over the side, seeing the last of Bombay for many weeks to come, when there, one of the foremost of the lazy, dirty coolies, always present to see ships

come and go, was my old friend. Suddenly he put his hand to his mouth and yelled: "Ah, you think you ver' smart man, Mister Sparks, ver' smart man indeed—but I spit in your tea every morning!"

Value for Your Penny

WINIFRED I. HAWARD

THERE was a time when a penny was good currency for the pleasures of life. That was before two world wars sent values haywire; when pocket-money stood at a basic minimum of one penny a week, rising by increments to threepence. To lay out your money wisely called for care and thought; you demanded solid value, and you got it. It is not so much the change in money-values which has robbed the penny of its power; you don't get so much magic packed into the same space.

The major decision lay between sweets and 'things,' between the transient and the durable. For your sweets you need go no farther than the village shop—the partitioned-off end of a one-storey cottage, one step down, on to a flagstone hollowed out by innumerable feet, a counter set out with many glass-jars, and Mrs Higgs, in a lace collar, behind it. They were all the same—the partition, the flagstone, the jars of sweets, and the lady in a lace collar.

And what your penny could buy! Four ounces of any kind of sweet, or your choice from such delights as a yard of licorice, two bars of chocolate, eight mint-balls, four large humbugs, two 'Swaggering Dicks'—long sticks of sugar striped like a barber's pole. What forgotten magic lay in stripes—vertical, as in your humbugs; the red, white, and blue spirals of 'Swaggering Dick'; and the whorls of delicate pinks and blues inviolate at the heart of a glass marble.

There was magic, too, in phrases—the phrases on Cupid's whispers, those small discs of coloured sugar, inscribed: 'You're my sweetheart,' 'Kiss me,' 'I love you.' The messages did not move me, except that 'I love you' had a scarcity value: I liked to lick off the words.

THE real place for value, if you could resist the transient pleasures, was 'Miss Marsh's' in town. It was wedged in between mightier neighbours, and its small single window displayed mere infants' paraphernalia—rattles, balls, and the like. Your place, master or missy, was inside—one step down, to a boarded floor smoothed by countless feet, to a space some three yards square, lined with cardboard boxes, and Miss Marsh, in black, making her entrance from some enchanted treasure-house behind.

Dangling from nails were penny whistles, with cords of red and gold, and other masculine knick-knacks. For the ladies, necklaces of small pearly shells and of shiny coloured glass, and looped-up bunches of beads. If you preferred, you could buy a penny box of assorted beads. They could be made into necklaces, or used for decorating presents for grown-ups, but the real attraction was to possess so many colours in so small a compass.

Some of the cardboard boxes housed a collection of penny dolls. They were about

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four inches high, with china heads and stuffed bodies, and magnificent crowns of golden hair. I never had much use for dolls, but I could not resist these blue-eyed blondes. Miss Marsh also supplied crinkled paper at a penny a roll, so that, for a small outlay, you could have a bevy of dolls dressed in all the colours of the rainbow.

Models of tin, marked 'Made in Germany,' sold from a penny upwards. They did not attract me. The edges were sharp, the colours crude, after the brilliance of beads and the rich greens and pinks of crinkled paper; and they were too matter-of-fact. Alas for the future! You could get together an army for one penny per man, and twopence for the gun-carriage.

From Germany, too, came 'transfers,' fifty or so pictures to the sheet, each picture the size of a postage-stamp. You laid them face downwards in water, transferred them to a clean sheet of paper, and, hey presto!, there was your picture, always slightly askew.

Then those 'Japanese Flowers'—little coils of paper, which, when placed in water, blossomed slowly into lovely tinted sprays of tiny leaves and flowers. At a penny a box, heralds of another invasion.

In the weeks before Christmas, it paid to save, for then the dusk of Miss Marsh's shop was transformed into a seasonal glitter. There was tinsel, silver and gold, at a penny a ball; boxes of crackers, four in each, under transparent paper, deep blue and ruby red, like rich stained-glass; Christmas-tree decorations, a silver nutmeg and a golden pear at twopence, or a little bell, that tinkled faintly, at threepence. To-day, anything that sparkles with sharp points of radiance, from the Crown Jewels to lights coming out at dark, brings back a faint nostalgia of Miss Marsh's Christmas stock.

But the choicest object could not be had on ordinary terms. It was a kaleidoscope. It cost sixpence, and it was worth it. One of the mysteries of progress is why the kaleidoscope has gone out of favour. However you shake it, the coloured splinters of glass always make a different pattern, fascinating in its symmetry. Perhaps the working is too simple. The modern age prefers mechanism to magic.

I always looked on Miss Marsh as old, with the timeless age of a fairy godmother. I believe she married, and went out to Australia.

SOMEWHERE in the town was a Penny Bazaar, a long gallery with counters set out with domestic wares. It was memorable for packets of writing-paper, faintly scented, in blue, green, pink, and lemon, with envelopes to match. The penny bazaars vanished in the upheaval of the First World War, and their successors, the multiple-stores, never recaptured the glamour of the gas-jets and semi-darkness, nor the fact that everything lived down to its name.

For literature, the station bookstall supplied any reasonable need. There was a penny series, in bright-pink paper covers, which took in the classics. I remember the appearance of the 'Brer Rabbit' stories and *The Water Babies* in the series, and we anticipated the next number as eagerly as any Victorian awaited Dickens by instalments. Uplift came out in green—*Jessica's First Prayer*, and a book which drew more tears than anything else in the world's literature; I think it was called *How Little Bessie kept the Wolf from the Door*.

The railway-station may have been exceptionally enterprising—we were a rising seaside-resort—for, hard by the bookstall, was a row of slot-machines, which received your penny, and proceeded to reveal, through peepers, Billie Burke, or some other contemporary star, moving and smiling in a green satin undress.

BUT the shadow of things to come was already upon us. There were the first moving-pictures, shown from time to time in a concert-hall—standing room for children, one penny. It wasn't considered the thing to stand, but could you beat it for value? Over two hours of suspense; ten reels, lasting about ten minutes each, the rest of the time being taken up in changing reels. The thrills of movement, seen through a perpetual rain—*The Runaway Cheese*, *A Day in the Life of an American Policeman*, and all the Wild West. Speed, master or missy, bearing you along on its wings to a future where pennies rolled headlong into Time's ticker-tape.

The penny had had it. So had a world with beer at twopence a pint, tobacco at threepence an ounce, and the pleasant habit of throwing in thirteen penny-buns for a shilling. The tiny splinters of colour in the kaleidoscope would never make that pattern again.

A Jubilee in the World of Models

H. A. ROBINSON, B.Eng., M.R.S.T.

MOST people love anything in miniature. One has only to see the crowds around the model stall at an exhibition and to note the brightening of even the layman's eye as he looks at some perfect Lilliputian effect to realise this. There is something about a tiny man-of-war or locomotive that goes straight to the heart. As an American writer says: 'These things have a fascination of their own . . . they weave a spell.'

Before the turn of the century there was no popular interest in models or modelling. Individual miniature railways and ships certainly existed, but these in the main were the property of the monied few. 'Rich men's toys,' a term often applied, describes well how the populace viewed these things.

In 1900, however, a certain keen young engineer's apprentice from Northampton crossed the Channel to see the great exhibition then being held in Paris. This was W. J. Bassett-Lowke, and from the inspiration he received during his visit grew in the end the now world-famous model-firm which bears his name and which was the pioneer of commercialised model-making.

Being interested in the miniature, Bassett-Lowke had not been long at the exhibition before his attention was drawn by some toy engines that had been submitted by the Brothers Bing of Nuremberg. These were essentially for children, having fantastic outlines—not in the least like any existing engines—and lurid colouring, but the workmanship was excellent.

The engines being so good, the apprentice found himself wondering whether they could not be made to represent actual engines, and in particular some English engines for sale in this country. On his return to Northampton, the notion simmered, grew into a concrete idea, and eventually passed into active realisation.

Even as an apprentice, Bassett-Lowke had some connection with the few modellers of the day through small items he turned out in his father's machine-shop. With this backing, therefore, he approached the Nuremberg firm and persuaded them to produce a model to an English pattern—a famous locomotive of the old London and North Western Railway, the 'Black Prince' being chosen. In a little time this came to England and was distributed through Bassett-Lowke on a mail-order basis.

The 'Black Prince' was the first mass-produced model ever to be sold in this country or elsewhere. It was also the item that was to turn model-making into big business and bring interest in the miniature to the man in the street. The success of the model was immediate, and there soon followed items to go with it, while other firms began to see the possibilities in model-making for the populace. Thus was the seed set from which is sprung present-day commercialised modelling in its many branches.

THE interest in model-railwaying by the man of moderate means grew apace, and by the time the clouds of the First World War were gathering the hobby had a big following. Clubs had come into being, for enthusiasts soon saw that, by pooling their equipment, systems could be built far beyond the resources of any single individual. Periodicals appeared, and numerous books were written on the subject.

Bassett-Lowke's had now become a limited liability company, and looking into the future, and visualising the great use their products might be in many walks of life, the firm were taking an extremely wide view of the whole modelling situation. Scale-model ships were produced for nautical enthusiasts,

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while the use of models in commercial and other concerns was fully explored. The success in this latter field has been phenomenal, and models have been supplied to no less than eighty-eight firms and authorities since the end of the late war. Also, during the hostilities, the whole resources of the firm were concentrated on the production of thousands of models for the War Office, Admiralty, and Royal Air Force—many for the quick training of personnel.

The first model intended for a real job of work was an instructional layout made in 1903 for signalmen of the Great Western Railway. Each year after this saw many such models turned out, covering a wide range of subjects. Thus a miniature representation of Blackpool was undertaken for the Corporation of that town, to a scale of 40 feet to the inch, while a fleet of working battleships, ranging from 12 to 20 feet in length, was built for an Imperial Services Exhibition at Earl's Court. Among the big models constructed before 1914 was one of the entire village and works of Port Sunlight, to the order of Lever Brothers, and one of the Immingham Dock, for the Great Central Railway. An interesting model of the period was the site of the 1913 Aisgill Moor railway disaster, completed for the court of inquiry.

The First World War came as a great check to private model-making, and to modelling in general, and Bassett-Lowke's switched over to the manufacture of screw-gauges for the Ministry of Munitions. But with the return of peace everything bounded into life once more. Model-railwaying as a popular hobby now spread to America, while in England a very tiny type of model-train came into use to suit the extremely restricted space of the semi-detached villas then spreading with mushroom growth across the country.

THE between-war years were years of steady development, save for the trade slump of 1927-28, 1939 being a peak year as far as the buying of equipment was concerned. The continually expanding interest of the ordinary man in model-railwaying alone is well shown by the records of the Model Railway Club of London. It held an exhibition in 1910. This became an annual affair, and graduated from the original headquarters in St John's School, Tottenham Court Road, by way of the Kingsway Hall, to the whole

of the first-floor and basement of the Central Hall, Westminster, where the event is now held. At the first exhibition little more than a few friends of the members were present. In 1939 some 30,000 persons passed round the stands.

In the U.S.A. some very active clubs came into existence, one being the New York Chapter of Model Engineers, which built an elaborate small-sized system which was, and still is, worked on 'track night' like a real railway, all the various officials necessary for the operation of trains being present. As in England, many books were written on the subject, and numerous periodicals appeared.

Bassett-Lowke's still went on turning out better models for the private enthusiast, as well as models for other purposes. The making of miniature passenger-carrying railways for amusement parks and seaside resorts was, too, being developed. Miniature lines had been supplied before 1914, two of the most noteworthy being for the Marine Park at Rhyl, in North Wales, and for Luna Park, Geneva. Although not the biggest, perhaps the most noted between-war line built by the firm was the Treasure Island Railway at the Wembley British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25, which had the honour of carrying both King George V and Queen Mary as passengers.

Many other noted models came from Northampton during this time of lull. 1921 saw one of the *Olympic*, built to the order of the White Star Steamship Company; 1924 produced what is described as the smallest model-railway in the world, for the Queen's Doll's House; while in 1929 a perfect model of H.M.S. *Hood* was built, as also three models of the *Carnarvon Castle* for the Union Castle Line.

The uses to which models and miniatures could be put seemed unending. In 1931 a small-sized railway-ticket sorting device was produced for the Irish Sweepstake authorities in Dublin, while in the same year an instructional sectional-model of the *Empress of Britain* was completed for the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company, a huge 21-foot model of this ship having been made in 1930 for the C.P.R.'s exhibit in the Lord Mayor's Show. Other items modelled during these years were the ships *Georgic* and *Britannic*, electric pylons, a scale pasteurising milk plant, and also the Underground System of London, for the Transport Board.

A JUBILEE IN THE WORLD OF MODELS

SO the years rolled on towards the Second World War. The last two before the outbreak of hostilities were particularly active in the whole domain of the miniature. Enthusiasts were spending freely, and more and more big models for firms were being ordered. 1938 witnessed the completion, and exhibition at Glasgow, of a scale-model coal-mine for the British Mining Association. It also saw a model of 100-year-old Euston Station, for the L.M.S. centenary. In the year of war itself, several big models were delivered, including one of the *Mauretania* for Cammell-Laird & Company, six of the *Strathaird* and *Strathmore* for the P. & O. Steamship Company, and a big engine for the garden-railway of Lord Downshire.

Then into the maelstrom once more. Modelling for the ordinary hobbyist stopped, but, as mentioned, the whole resources of Bassett-Lowke's were directed to the making of thousands of models for the authorities. Much of the work was highly confidential, and among the more famous wartime engineering jobs first modelled in Northampton were the Ingles Bridge, the Bailey Bridge, and Mulberry Harbour. At one time or another almost every assault craft, new type of vehicle and weapon was reproduced in miniature.

AS with the First World War, cessation of hostilities saw the hobby of modelling bound back into full life, 1946 being a good year for model-firms.

Since the V-days many noteworthy advancements have taken place. National recognition has been given to model-railwaying, at least, by the broadcasting and televising of a model-railway programme, in which various efforts were shown and described by their owners, the whole proceedings ending with

a 'run past' of miniature locomotives. The international aspect of this side of the hobby has, too, been demonstrated by the installing of a hooter in the L.M.S. Cheshire works, inscribed as from American model-railroaders to their English friends.

Two new fields of activity have also come much to the fore—those, namely, of power-driven model cars and power-driven model aeroplanes. Power-driven model-aeroplaning has taken a particularly firm hold and bids fair to equal in popularity model-railwaying itself. Large meetings are held, at which thousands of spectators attend, while the enthusiasts are turning out machines which for beauty and precision defy description. Radio-control and jet-propulsion are the latest aims in the field.

During this second post-war period Bassett-Lowke's have added many accessories to their already huge list of products, while their commercial model departments have found fresh outlets for their efforts in the scores of models that are being required in connection with town planning, rehousing, and factory development schemes. Indeed, permission was given to turn some of their capacity in this direction even before the final overthrow of Germany.

So we reach the present time. Model-railroading is now a highly commercialised and world-wide hobby, while, following closely, comes nautical and aeronautical modelling, with also the younger sport of miniature-car racing; and in the fields of industry and instruction model representation has come into its own. Every branch of the miniature art has its own set of periodicals and textbooks, some highly technical, to say nothing of films that have been made to cover the subjects. And all within fifty years. A half-century of progress indeed.

Doorsteps

*Here are steps of spotless white
Never soiled from morn to night—
What a dull house this must be,
With no sign of company!*

*Here are steps where footmarks go
Pointing lightly to and fro,
Just as if they meant to say:
We can't bear to keep away!*

*Some like doorsteps clean and fair,
With no sign of traffic there;
Those by friendly feet impressed—
That's the kind I like the best!*

ELIZABETH FLEMING.

Green of Memory

LAWRENCE SPINGARN

IT had been the hottest May in the township's records, yet Noah Harms was ploughing this morning for a potato planting in his fallow south lot. Thinking of her husband's seventy years, Laura Harms had pleaded with him against such effort, but Noah was stubborn, and somewhat deaf to boot. Neighbours called him a 'seeker,' and there was something in his eyes that went beyond ordinary boundaries. Tall, lean, grizzled as a silver birch, he spanked the mare with the reins and lunched bareheaded behind her. The sun, working against him, walked the other way in a new furrow.

'Whoa, Gip. Pull, damn thee, pull!'

Something snagged the coulter, which was dull, rusted, fit only for soft ground. Bending down, Noah touched a boulder bigger than his head, with a long shank to it. He threw the reins upon Gip's flanks, tugged the coulter free, and snatched irritably at the boulder. Of course it didn't budge, and the sun turned upon Noah, blazing. 'Christmas!' he swore, but the heat was no matrix for such language. 'Christmas, come away!'

It was Noah who came away first, toppling sideways, feeling the dirk of sudden pain plunge into his head. He lay gasping for a moment, then rolled upon his stomach and clutched the tall grass with desperate hands. A roaring sound made conches of his ears. From that moment his thinking lost its anchor. He yearned for strength, the lost strength that had thrown Harry Cooke shoulder flat upon the drilling-ground the day long ago when the boys had wrestled among its shadows. The drilling-ground! It gripped him yet with its mystery; the Continentals had marched there in secret, hidden by the surrounding woods. Yes, the drilling-ground. . . . He must find it, find the strength he had left there.

THIS memory was like spring-water in his throat. Feeling the trickle of a plan, he watched his own chimney pouting among the elms; watched until he could rise to his feet again, shading his eyes to look. Laura was busy inside the house. Thank heaven, too, that she could not see this far, for she would crab at him for ploughing without his hat. Also, she had better not see him leave the south lot for the deep woods.

Strength, he thought, as he led Gip into the shade beside the wall and hobbled her with the reins. If he went up through the trees to the drilling-ground, he would find strength. It was there in the clear spring among frogs and newts, a spring sweetened by the presence of ferns that kept the sun away. The sun was his opponent now; Harry Cooke had been thrown and pinned upon that peculiar, mossy soil that never grew grass. Harry Cooke dead? It couldn't be! That was a legend darker than the one about the drilling-ground, which, after all, he had seen with his own two eyes. Strength, he thought, their youthful strength, buried in that secret place.

It was a long walk up the steep field to the farther wall, from sun to the edge of shade, a green shade that stretched up the mountain like silk on an umbrella. At the wall, Noah took out his kerchief, wiped his neck and face, then looked back. The clothes flapping on his line were like urgent flags at a foot-race, the kind of race he used to run on Howitt's Meadow. Satisfied that Laura was safely back inside the house, he turned again, found the gap in the wall, and climbed through.

As he faced the hostile line of trees, uncut for half-a-century, Noah squared his shoulders like a youth accepting a challenge. The trees were the posts of a stockade he had once

read about—a stockade shutting him out, leaving him in the world of Mrs Harms, the parson, the tax-assessor, lean seasons, and the stubborn soil he had battled so long. Reaching out and parting the underbrush, Noah took the long, cool plunge into the green of memory.

THERE was no trail, for he had entered at random. The film of heat was gone, and where the huge old stumps lay like giant toads between the smaller trees moss curled on the rotting wood in dungeon dampness unaffected by the sun. Noah's feet squished in the decomposed leaves. There was a stream somewhere near, and at last he came to its rocky bed and heard the water washing against the stones. When he reached the deep pool and saw the plume of rapids beyond, he stopped, sat down on a log, and removed his clothes.

A moment later Noah Harms was standing shoulder-deep in the pool, where flints at the bottom kept his tender feet in motion. The leaves of the low-hanging branches flecked his white skin with a lacy design, and, when he tried to swim, the sun was a hundred golden balls bobbing just beyond his grasp. His head dripping, he pushed up from beneath the water and let go a round shout that echoed and was answered, as if another boy stood poised for a dive.

That would be Harry Cooke now, Noah thought. He was always the daring one—first to dive into unplumbed water, first to try the new ice with his skates, and first to call on Laura Beaman, now Mrs Harms. He was over there, hallooing from a rock above the pool, his yellow hair a net that caught the sunlight. And Noah shouted again, just to hear Harry answer, forgetting that Harry lay silent in the burial-place on the West Branch.

When his body had dried, Noah put on his clothes and left the pool behind. Finding a faint trail bordered with ground-pine and Indian-pipe, the old man worked his way to drier soil, where cedars displaced oaks and maples. The trail rose along the side of a grey cliff spangled with lichen and star-moss. As he climbed, Noah recalled the cave at the top, formed by an overhanging rock. His feet were tired when they levelled off at last, and his breath came in gasps, but there, sure enough, was the cave, with ashes and the

charred logs of old fires lying in its mouth.

Noah went in as far as he could, to 'The Chimney,' a stone funnel leading to the top of the rock. Coming out again, Noah paused here and there to read the inscriptions and dates. The latest name was his own and, under it, scrawled in charcoal, was Harry Cooke's signature and two crude hands clasped in friendship. Here was where 'The Tribe' had met, but of 'The Tribe' only Noah was left. Squatting down over one of the campfires, he sifted its ashes through his hands. The only thing he found was the blackened blade of a penknife.

NOAH climbed to the top of the rock by way of 'The Chimney,' and there he met the sun once more. Its warmth felt good after the chilly darkness below. Shading his eyes, Noah studied the crazy slant of his own house. Miles beyond it was the white steeple of the church, the only symmetrical and pleasing object in sight. He had been married from that church; he would be buried from it, too, but now he did not think of death. From this vantage-point he should be able to spot the drilling-ground, yet, as his eyes swept the woods and the infrequent fields they encroached upon, they glimpsed no hint of the lost clearing.

A wider clearing caught his eye instead; Noah marked it well before descending to the woods on the far side of the cave. The way was more open here, but now it grew dim as the sun fell in its long arc. The first familiar object near the clearing was a stone corral, and beyond that, where a street had been, were cellar-holes filled with rubble and tall weeds. The quarry itself was an open pit, with brackish green water a few feet from the top and rusty cables coiled like pythons about its rim.

It was even longer since Noah had been here. He recalled his mother sending him once a week; he came with homemade bread for the Italian quarrymen's wives, who often treated him to wine. Now there was nothing left of the village; the stone had given out. The shed where the hoist machinery once stood swarmed with wild-bees in the stillness of afternoon; the whine of the cable was being mocked by the woodpecker and the dragonfly. Noah Harms, smiling among the ruins, kicked at bits of iron and spat consolately at empty tins.

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AN hour later, starting from a doze against a tree, Noah gasped in surprise at the quick-coming dusk. He was not at the drilling-ground after ail, and was alone. Why, goodness, without Harry Cooke he would never find the place. And Harry Cooke? He might be at Laura Beaman's now. Quick! Noah told himself, get there before he has time to propose.

Scrambling to his feet, Noah set off at a quick trot along a wagon-road that grew more worn and less weedy. He came to the black road and turned down it toward his place. Two miles more, and he heard the neighing of the mare. Unhobbling her, he led her through lanes to the barn and a meal of oats, but as he approached the house his feet were quiet and crafty. It was very late. He would use the front door, the company door, as he always did when calling on Laura. Did Harry Cooke enter by the side door? he wondered dismally.

'Noah Harms!' Laura Harms was rocking on the front porch, tapping the boards with intolerant feet. 'You're late,' Mrs Harms said. 'And wherever you were, you plumb forgot your hat. Just look at you! Supper's put away, and I'm not stirring a step to warm it up.'

When Noah lit the lamp and drew near,

his wreathy look made his wife stare. 'Anybody come by for me?' he asked.

'Who should come for thee?' she said.

'Harry Cooke,' Noah answered. 'Was to meet me here, but, when he didn't, I set out for the drilling-ground myself. Natur'ly, I got lost.'

'Lost, Noah? That's an odd way of saying it.'

'Never care, Laura. He'll come for thee at least. I'll bide here.'

When Noah stooped and kissed her, she smiled indulgently and clung to his arm. She even broke her resolution and went to warm his supper. But while he was eating, she made a cold compress and slipped it around his head.

'Poor boy,' she murmured, loosening his heavy clothes. 'Thee was working without a hat. Come to bed, Noah. Come.'

'I'm fine,' he protested. 'Strong as a young bull.' He stopped as if a thought had pierced his tongue. 'Odd thing, Laura. The woods have grown up so that I couldn't find the drilling-ground. Yet it's cooler here than there, much cooler.'

'Thee'll be all right,' his wife said, putting her white head beside his. 'Besides, I'll tell thee now. Harry Cooke won't come by. We'll be alone to-night.'

Again the Snow

*Fall, flakes, and cotton-wool the fields,
Stretching from here to Marley,
And on, past there, to Poole,
Quicken the frost earth with blankets,
Drift over wounds in the hills,
And lie tender on trees.
Fall, undecided flake of smoothness,
Star-shaped under the glass,
And poise not here at the window—
The earth is your birth and death.
From the rivers and streams and oceans
You rose as a misted cloud
To your cool haven, the sky.
You tired of her empty love,
And longed for the earth again.
Flurry and rush down madly
Laughing, bubbling with joy,
At the greenness of leaves here,
At the smiling of sadness;
Earth's prodigal returned.*

W. McDERMOTT.

Christmas-Trees are Big Business

ARTHUR GAUNT, F.R.G.S.

THOUSANDS of families throughout the United Kingdom will be enjoying the fruits of a state-owned enterprise this Christmas without knowing it! At the same time, the country will be saving a considerable sum in dollars, which was part of the price we paid for our Yuletide festivities not so long ago. And to improve the bargain we are simultaneously helping to promote an important, expanding British activity.

You don't have to look far back to recall the days when most of our Christmas-trees came from abroad. Before the war, up to 250,000 were shipped to Britain every year from British Columbia alone, and Quebec and New Brunswick swelled our total imports to at least 600,000 trees each December. The Scandinavian countries did a worthwhile trade with us, too, spruce from Norway being bought by many parents in Britain to be decorated for their children at Yuletide.

Nowadays the story is changed, the trade going along other channels. Canada still regards her Christmas-trees as a 'million dollar business,' and encourages their cultivation by supplying seedlings free to farmers in certain areas and permitting settlers to cut a stipulated number of trees from the scores of state-owned forests. But to-day the output goes to Canadian cities and towns, to the U.S.A., and to the West Indies and Hawaii, where Christmas traditions are no less religiously observed.

In the United Kingdom, the wartime slogan 'Grow More Food' has its counterpart in the post-war campaign to grow more trees, and consequently we are now able to meet more than 75 per cent of our Christmas-tree requirements without going abroad at all.

the state forests which have been established in Wales, Norfolk, Derbyshire, the Lake District, and North Yorkshire. True, this afforestation of large tracts of our countryside with conifers has not been carried out primarily to enable us to celebrate the Incarnation in the traditional way. Our new forests have been established first and foremost to provide timber for industry, and thus to reduce our imports. Yet the supplying of Christmas-trees has become a profitable side-line.

Municipal authorities also are finding the business useful as a means of reducing local taxes. Conifer plantations which screen waterworks become money-spinners during December. Manchester Corporation, for example, sends about 40,000 trees from Thirlmere to the Christmas market each year.

A few years hence, when the Scottish hydro-electric schemes are completed, and conifers screen these also, still another source for home-grown Christmas-trees will present itself. In addition, there are a number of privately-owned plantations where trees are grown specially for sale at Christmas.

Although Canada supplies comparatively few Christmas-trees to Britain to-day, many of those now being grown have been raised from Canadian seeds. Literally millions of Douglas firs have been reared, and practically all these were from seeds supplied by the Dominion, which has a fine seed-extraction plant at New Westminster, British Columbia.

Sitka spruce, Norway fir, and sometimes small pines are also commonly sold as Christmas-trees, for the purchasing public are by no means critical about the species they are offered for Yuletide decoration. All they ask is that the tree should resemble the traditional idea of a Christmas-tree and should have plenty of branches from which to hang gifts. In point of fact, the Douglas fir, whilst attractive itself, is not as suitable for the

THE bulk of the Christmas-trees sold in our shops this Yuletide will have come from

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purpose as some other species, its branches being apt to bend inconveniently under the weight of all but the lightest articles.

EXCEPT in the case of the few private plantations already mentioned, trees which go to the Christmas market are not raised specially for that trade. They are unwanted trees from new forests, trees which have been removed to give more space to their neighbours.

New plantations are purposely crowded, partly to enable the seedlings to protect one another. A compact plantation is less affected by gales or cold winds than one in which the young trees are widely spaced, since one tree shields another. Secondly, by planting many more than will ultimately be needed, those which thrive the best can be selected for full-scale attention, and the others removed.

It is these 'thinnings' which go to the market as Christmas-trees, together with a much smaller number of 'tops' cut from trees felled for poles or pit-props. Thinning may take place at any time between six and fourteen years, at which stage of growth it is not difficult to determine whether a tree of this sort will be worth bringing to maturity. Roughly, only one tree in four merits retention, and the supply of Christmas-trees is therefore always reasonably good. The chief circumstance likely to restrict supplies is frost in early summer, as this may destroy the young trees.

Most of the trees are uprooted and sent to the market when they grow to a height of three feet. A few selected specimens may be earmarked for special cultivation to ten feet or so, for there is a demand for outsize ones for outdoor displays. Yet this trade is a very minor side-line.

On the other hand, it must not be imagined that the conifers which decorate our homes at the festive season are throwouts in the ordinarily accepted meaning of the term. Since it is impossible to tell which specimens will thrive most successfully until at least the sixth year, all the Christmas-trees on sale have invariably undergone just the same careful tending as those which have been allowed to remain in the plantation.

A Christmas-tree spends its first two years in a tree nursery, where it receives continual care. It is protected from too much rain and excessive sunshine, and given every chance to become a giant of the forest. It is screened

from dry or cold winds by a surrounding hedge of beech, and its welfare is promoted in every possible way.

Two transplantings usually follow, the first at the end of two years, and the second two or three years later, when the seedling is given a place in the real plantation. These transplantings not only provide an opportunity for thinning out the nursery and selecting the most robust trees for further cultivation, but they also help to check the spread of the roots. Were these to extend far, the tree would require more than its fair share of ground in the plantation.

An incidental benefit, so far as those which will eventually be sold as Christmas-trees are concerned, is that they are made suitable for comparatively small pots. Observe the roots of the Christmas-tree you buy this year, and notice how short they are. The common belief that the roots of any tree always extend as far outward as the branches is untrue, and in the case of the Christmas-tree it is particularly fallacious.

ENOUGH has already been said to show that the trees we introduce into our homes at Christmas will have received special care in their raising, and that if they are to survive for a reasonable period indoors they should not be treated harshly. Remember that a warm room is not the natural habitat of the Christmas-tree, and that its life will be prolonged if it is normally kept in an unheated place and brought into warm surroundings only for the short duration of the festivities.

Subjecting such trees to abnormally warm conditions is one big reason why so few of them thrive if they are planted in the garden in January, with the hope that they will survive for use year after year. Replanting is not likely to succeed unless the tree has been kept in well-moistened, well-packed earth while indoors. It should not have been near a fire, nor indeed in any heated room for more than three hours at a time. If you are planning to keep your Christmas-tree in the garden from year to year, also select one with undamaged roots in the first place.

You will, of course, avoid buying one which is merely the top of a larger tree, as these cannot be grown like those with roots. But even they should be 'planted' in moist soil when they are put in a pot for the house. Moistening the cut base will prevent or post-

CHRISTMAS-TREES ARE BIG BUSINESS

pone the falling of the needles, which otherwise are liable to cause unsightly litter on the carpet. Daily watering to keep the earth moist is to be recommended.

There is an art in decorating Christmas-trees, too, and it is not concerned only with the colourful effect of tinsel and electric-lights. An otherwise admirable scheme can be completely spoiled by unwittingly putting heavy gifts near the tips of the branches, instead of hanging lighter ones there and attaching the heavy ones nearer the trunk, where they will not cause the branches to sag.

THE trade in Christmas-trees may have become a big commercial enterprise, but it has not destroyed the sentimental and æsthetic aspects, and thousands of homes will be brightened and made more Christmassy by such trees this Yuletide. Perhaps the

oddest fact about the custom is its comparatively late adoption in Britain.

Germany took it up in the 16th century, but it did not begin to catch on in England until the Prince Consort introduced it at Windsor in 1841. Even in the days of Dickens it was by no means widely observed in this country, and he found it necessary to explain to his readers just what a Christmas-tree was!

Yet to-day probably one household in every ten throughout Britain has a tree at Yuletide, and this is one custom which commercialisation certainly has not spoiled. On the contrary, it has helped to promote the rite. Thanks to the exploitation of the Christmas-tree side of forestry in the United Kingdom, indulgence in the custom this year will not widen the dollar gap, and, although imports will continue to be restricted, a shortage of Christmas-trees is unlikely.

The Lightfoot Lad

*Lightfoot lad, I watched you come,
Treading as to beat of drum,
Down my street, and straight I knew
Dreams and fairy-tales come true.*

*For a while, and with their going
Leave the only truth worth knowing—
Love, once known, can never die:
We have found it, you and I.*

*Lightfoot lad, so young, so slender,
Lips so gay and eyes so tender,
Smile your rueful smile, salute,
Go then, leaving music mute.*

*Lightfoot lad, now you must go
Lightly down the street, and so
From my life again depart,
Take with you my happy heart.*

*It is yours, and with the giving
All the pain and joy of living
Crystallise, and I am glad.
Fare you well, my lightfoot lad.*

*Come back soon, or come back never,
Love once known is love for ever.
Naught can touch the love we had.
God be with you, lightfoot lad.*

MARJORIE HERBERT.

Mysteries of Noise

Professor A. M. LOW

A 'MYSTERY' high-pitched humming noise has been reported by many hundreds of people from different parts of Britain and recently an advertisement even appeared asking those who had heard the 'unidentified continuous vibratory noise in the atmosphere' to get into touch with the advertiser. Similar unidentifiable noises have been reported from other parts of the world. In Copenhagen, for instance, the sound was described as being 'like the singing in a telegraph-wire or the noise of a petrol-pump.' So far no scientific explanation of the noises has been given. Many people have jumped to the conclusion that the sounds are produced by experiments with jet engines or result from atom research and that they hear the noises, while other people do not, because their ears are more sensitive.

It is true that some people have ears sensitive to a wider band of sound vibrations. The range of sounds we can hear varies from about 16 cycles a second, almost the deepest note, through 125 cycles a second, the average pitch of a man's voice, to 10,000 cycles, the highest frequency used in high-quality broadcasting. There are 'sounds' above this which we cannot hear. The fact that a dog can hear them can easily be demonstrated by using a special whistle producing a very high note. When the whistle is blown, the only sound a human being hears is a slight hiss, but the dog hears what is apparently a piercing note and responds. Undoubtedly insects are sensitive to sound of much higher frequency—32,000 cycles a second insect noises have been measured. Beyond this, we come to the realm of ultrasonics, vibrations of the same nature as audible sounds, but not producing all the phenomena of detectable sound. Ultrasonics have been increasingly used in recent years for a great variety of purposes ranging

from submarine signalling and detection to the homogenising of milk and the destruction of bacteria and small insects. The frequencies used are in the range of 1,000,000 cycles a second upwards.

EARS differ not only in the range of sounds they can detect, but also in their sensitivity. It is fairly simple to construct an amplifier that enables a human being to have the same degree of sensitivity as a wild deer, hearing a footfall many yards away and even the thud of a leaf as it drops in the forest. From experience I can say it is fortunate our ears are not tuned to this degree of sensitivity, for then we should find life intolerable. It is likely that some people who hear mystery sounds in the atmosphere have abnormally sensitive hearing, enabling them to pick up sounds too soft for others to hear, but one would then logically expect them to find the usual noises of life, even the conversation of their friends, unbearably loud. Fish can hear a footfall yards away on the bank, but they succumb fairly easily to really intense vibrations.

To-day, we have audiometers and other devices making it possible to detect the existence and nature of sounds, even when the sounds are outside the human range, or so gentle as to be inaudible. Moreover, once detected, the sound can be traced to its point of origin by methods extensively developed for sound-ranging of artillery, submarine detection, and other purposes. It should not, therefore, be hard to detect and trace these unidentified vibrations in the atmosphere. The fact that it has not been possible to do so suggests that, except in well-attested cases, the vibrations may originate inside rather than outside the hearers. The phenomenon of 'noises in the head' appears to have become

commoner in recent years, probably due to increased nervous strain in life. Medical experts tell me that heavy smoking and drinking or low blood-pressure are conducive to the hearing of these annoying sounds. The sounds are not real in the objective sense, but they are just as real as the spots before our eyes when we are liverish or as the fire-works we see when we press on closed eyelids.

There is a further possibility which must be considered. Human beings are extremely open to suggestion. If I enter a silent room and say: 'What is that humming? Can't you hear it?', and continue in this strain long enough, many of the people present will, in the end, say they can hear the faint humming. If a single story appears in a newspaper about a 'mystery noise,' it is certain that other people all over the country will also hear the noise. We have known this happen before, and I am inclined to think that the present crop of unidentified noises can probably be described as acoustical flying saucers, with the exception of a few special cases for which there seems still no explanation. The very tense state of the world, of course, increases this suggestibility, especially when there are hints that the mystery noise is concerned with some new, very secret weapon. Incidentally, experiments with insects and small fish suggest that if it were possible to develop the death ray of fiction, it might have some very distant connection with ultrasonic vibrations of great intensity. But these would be completely inaudible.

IN the course of my work as an acoustical engineer I have been consulted about many different kinds of noise. Sound obeys certain now well-defined laws, and because of them, rather than in spite of them, it sometimes produces freakish effects. We must remember that human hearing, like human sight, has great limitations and is subject to illusions. The human ears are not very efficient direction-finders, and we are apt to jump to the conclusion that a sound which appears to come from a particular place actually originates in that place.

It is the case that sound travels more easily along solid bodies than through the air. It will be remembered that it was the sight of some children tapping signals to each other along a plank of wood that gave Laënnec the idea of the stethoscope, which he invented

in 1819. I have met with people in some modern blocks of flats complaining about 'the wireless next door,' when, in fact, the sound originated two or three floors away and was 'telephoned' along steel girders. We know now how to safeguard against this kind of thing, but a series of chance arrangements can still result in remarkable effects, with a piano sounding louder in a room many yards and several floors away than it does in the room in which it is being played. I once discovered in a block of flats that the waste-pipe of a bath had, accidentally, been constructed as a perfect speaking-tube. If there was no water in the bath a conversation in one bathroom was repeated almost as a ghostly voice in the bathroom above. I knew of one case where a man wanted to leave his house because a resonant wall made bird-twittering sound like a section of the Zoo.

REPORTS of ghostly sounds have come from many parts of the world. Investigation shows perfectly rational origins, except where the sounds are hallucinations. There is a mysterious sound like thunder, which is heard periodically in a town in Connecticut. This ghostly sound has naturally inspired great fear at times amongst the superstitious, but the origin seems to be in the earth, the sound probably being caused by some slipping of the strata. Popping noises heard in the region of a lake in New York State were always attributed to the ghosts of British and Colonial soldiers until a scientist showed they came from the bursting of bubbles of natural-gas. Singing sands were once thought to be siren voices, but are now well understood to originate in the friction of countless minute fragments moved by the wind.

The sounds produced by meteors—and also by bombs—have given rise to the idea that some sounds travel faster than others. But, as far as we know, the velocity of sound is constant in air of given density. Possibly the double sounds from meteors, one being heard after the meteor has disappeared, are due to the sounds travelling in layers of air of very different density.

During the War there was much argument about whether you did, or did not, hear the sound of the bomb that hit you. Thousands who were wounded or buried by bombs heard them coming down, and this should have settled the argument, since it was only by

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good fortune that they were not killed. In the case of V 2 rockets, Londoners became accustomed to hearing first the explosion of the missile and then the noise of it falling through the atmosphere. The rocket travelled faster than sound and we seemed to hear it backwards, as it were. Because a bomb falls in a curve, and may be passing over your head or coming towards you, it can appear to make quite different sounds in falling, and it is possible to hear the sound of its fall after it has exploded. Possibly this led to the idea that you do not always hear the sound of the bomb that hits you. Bombs can be heard twice if one presses one's ear to the ground.

THE invention of devices able to amplify sounds millions of times, to record them, and to analyse them has been of very great practical value in many directions. The quality of a sound to an experienced ear gives some indication of its origin. We all have experience of this, even if we do not realise it. We can recognise a friend's voice with great exactness, and the recognition depends upon subconscious analyses of the many different numbers, relative intensities, and pitches of the various tones which collectively you call his or her voice. The mechanical engineer detects the slightest variation in the sound of his machinery and may be able from a changed sound to say exactly what is happening in some invisible part. Models can be made and echoes tested by measuring the amount of light deflection as the result of sound-waves travelling across small plaster models. With long experience it is possible to estimate the health of a motor-car engine from its sound, as a doctor judges the health of a body by listening to the heart. There is a story of a manufacturer who had a valuable machine fail to function and eventually called in an engineer. The engineer listened to the machine for five minutes and then said that a certain screw should be tightened. When the engineer sent in a bill for five pounds, the manufacturer exclaimed: 'What, five pounds for listening to a machine for five minutes!' 'No,' replied the engineer, 'five

shillings for listening, and four pounds fifteen shillings for learning how to listen!'

EVERYONE is familiar with the phenomenon of sound-reflection and the echo, but not everyone realises how many echoes we hear every day and how important this reflection of sound is in ordinary affairs. It is probably correct to say we hear as many echoes as direct sounds. In a city room the roar of traffic is nearly all heard as reflected sound—reflected from walls and floor and the buildings opposite. A building with an outlook over a park will always be quieter than a building in a street with erections on both sides. A luxury hotel in Paris is cleverly constructed so that a minimum of windows catch the sound reflected from neighbouring buildings, and thus, although the street is noisy, the rooms are comparatively quiet. Ceilings and windows can be shielded against reflection. A wise open-air speaker will try to get his back to the wall for acoustical reasons, quite apart from those of morale. The wall will often reflect his voice and make it travel farther.

Many of the audience in a concert-hall hear echoes rather than direct sounds. Sound from the platform goes up to the ceiling and is thrown down on the back rows. For this reason, if a real echo is to be avoided, great care must be taken in designing the proportions of the building to ensure that the reflected sounds do not arrive at an appreciable interval later. The upholstery in a concert-hall is a matter not merely of comfort but also of acoustics. Even with the most careful calculations it is difficult to say exactly how good will be the acoustics of a hall until it has been built, but in these days, by tracing the passage of sounds and placing absorbing or reflecting surfaces as required, great control can be exercised. Our instruments and techniques are new, but that the idea is not so new was shown some years ago when Chesterfield House, London, was demolished and the ceiling of the ballroom found full of shells, apparently placed there by the Earl of Chesterfield to improve the acoustics.

Night Rider

MOSES GREEPH

NOSE and eyes glued to the window, Danny stared. Bang in the middle was a boy's bike—not a trike. It stood erect, ready to be ridden away. Danny crouched low, peering under the blur of his breath. He was in the saddle, his arms outspread, bobbing up and down, swerving at sixty miles an hour like a real express-train.

He saw the bell, a brand-new one, round and fat and silvery. Urgently he ting-a-linged. On vivid-blue tissue were spread parts, including thirty-seven ball-bearings. 'Look at that there spanner!' he breathed, swerving to a clearer view. The glass chilled his flattened nose. 'I'll come again tomorrow,' he thought excitedly, overwhelmed to have discovered this Aladdin's cave. 'Great Scott!'

He'd seen the lamp. It had a little green window on the side nearest him, and he could see the thickness of the plain circle in front—real magnified glass. His last impression as he lingeringly turned away was of a narrow orange oblong tin, and on it the magic word: DUNLOP.

Riding home, he trapped to the kerb the brand-new pedal of his dream bike, and ran breathlessly into the house. Maybe his mother would get the bike for him out of the window. 'Mother!' he cried. 'I've seen ...'

His mother was telling a man in a rain-coat: 'Not this week, Mr Corrigan. Next week. I'll pay you then for two weeks.'

Suddenly Danny's heart felt sad; but someone must be told about this wonderful bike. So he went into the parlour, the front-room, where his dad worked mending boots. And his dad asked him what sort of a bike it was, and the price. And Danny saw again the handlebars, and the yellow card on which was printed, in shiny black figures, £4. 19s. 6d.

He watched his dad in a dopey way as he filed the edge of a heel, his eyes averted. His dad's glasses fitted very close, so close that the lashes were swept upwards, giving his eyes a frightened and bewildered look. The glasses cost a shilling in the Eye Hospital. 'No, son,' his father said. 'Where would I get all that money? Four pounds, nineteen, and six!'

'Well, can I save up, then?'

'Of course you can. But you only get a penny a week spending-money. It would take you years and years and years,' his father reminded him, taking out his curved pipe with the yellow mouthpiece and putting it into his mouth. Although it was empty, he puffed and puffed, frowning thoughtfully. Suddenly he said: 'Go and see if Mrs Brady has any boots to mend.'

'Alright.'

Danny and his younger brothers loved to go there, for Mrs Brady was a nice lady who was very fond of little boys. There was always an apple or an orange, and, sometimes, tuppence, too. This time Danny returned with a pair of lady's shoes, that needed no repair at all.

Very often people did not even pay for their repairs; and each week Danny would go around to all those who owed money. One day, it was a little girl who opened the door to him. 'Oh, are you Danny from the cobbler's?' Danny replied that he was. 'Well, my mother said she's not in,' the child told him.

Danny often watched his dad working; and he talked about that bike. And his dad would hammer the nails harder.

THEN Danny did a bad thing, did what bad boys do, went jobbing—hanging

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around Victoria Station at the busy times, and going up to people carrying luggage. 'Carry yer bag, sir?' he'd plead.

He did something, too, even worse. He sold newspapers near the Cathedral. He was getting older now, but that dream was real as ever—his bike. Often he made only fourpence a day.

Staring into the shop-window, he would read the price-tickets on different parts—a pump, 3s. 2d.; a spanner, 1s. 4d.; a lamp, 4s. 9d. His eyes travelled guiltily up to the big yellow ticket—and he read it backwards. The sixpence was all right, but the nineteen shillings left him shattered. He did not dare to let his eyes move further leftward. Instead, he looked back to the lamp. He often went to that shop to stand and stare.

And Danny had a secret cave, and he was the only smuggler who knew. It was the lavatory. This was where he had tried, once, to make a man. To make a man out of dust, like it says in the Bible. He carefully selected some nice clean dirt, placed it in a matchbox, said a prayer over it, and went to bed. But in the morning there was no man. And Danny said to himself: 'Maybe I didn't do it proper.'

Now and then Danny would get beaten up by the Finnegan gang—boys who went jobbing too, bigger boys than he was. One day his nose wouldn't stop bleeding. A little stout man came up from behind him. 'Ow do, son!' the man called to him, smiling broadly. 'Want ter carry a parcel, an' earn a whole tanner?'

'Yes, sir!' It was not a big case, and quite light.

'Ah'm 'ere in t' station 'ere every Thursday an' Friday 'bout 'arf six, an' tha can carry me parcel. There'll be a whole tanner fer thee each time,' he promised, beaming.

'Orlright well,' Danny replied. Each week he earned a whole shilling with this nice man, who also bought the *Chronicle* and *News* from him, and immediately turned to the Stop Press column. This meant he backed horses. Danny knew.

When Danny went home that evening the man in the raincoat was there. And Danny heard his mother saying: 'Not this week—if you can wait. I'll pay you then for four weeks.'

When Mr Corrigan had gone, Danny was very quiet. All at once he went over to his mother, who was cooking some porridge at

the fire. 'Mother, I have money! A lot of money.'

She smiled at him sadly. 'No, son, it's not pennies I need.'

'But, mother . . .' So he told her about the smuggler's cave; and the money was safe, because he was a real proper smuggler and would never get caught by the revenue rangers. And he told also how he made this money, and about the bike. A real proper bike made of steel—a big boy's one—a two-wheeler.

'Danny,' she cried. 'Yer shouldn't. Sellin' papers.'

'I've got one pound, fourteen, and eightpence, and yer can 'ave it all—'cept the eightpence.' His mother, hardly able to believe him, went running into the workshop parlour. It was a big moment for Danny. His dad came out with him to the backyard and together they went to the secret cave. Behind the cistern his dad found an old cocoa-tin, heavy with coins; and a pump, a bell, five repair-outfits, and a lamp. For a minute, gazing down, he held them in his hands.

'Let me show you,' Danny said, taking the bicycle parts and searching in pockets, where something rattled. But his dad had turned away. Slowly, his dad went up the three stone steps leading to the scullery, and as he paused there Danny struck a match. A beam of light made plain the three steps upward. And his father went in, with bent head, the cocoa-tin between his hands.

AS usual, Danny looked in the bike shop-window the next day. His dream had gone. In its place was a little girl's thing—a cycle! 'Girl's cycle,' read the card. 'Cycle!' A proper girl's word, he thought, turning away in disgust.

Back at Victoria Station, Danny saw the stout man come into view, very happy. 'Come,' the man said, 'us'll 'ave a sup er tea an' some Eccles cakes.'

Next to his dad, this was the nicest man in all the world. And he got Danny's tale. About his money—the secret cave—everything. But the little man did not look happy, although he had smiled before on looking into the paper at the special part that men watch who back horses.

Danny counted his pennies. He made his way home, going purposely through dark streets. But he couldn't get lost. Not with *that*

lamp. 'My lamp wot shines when it's dark.'

'My little light,' his granny used to call him. 'My little light!' He remembered her once saying he was born in the middle of the night, at one o'clock in the morning. 'Must'a' bin reel dark then,' he mused. And then she died. There was a postcard and a black ribbon hanging near the door-knocker; that was when Danny knew his granny was dead.

If only Adam didn't eat that apple, everybody would er lived fer ever 'n' ever, he reflected, trudging home. Must'a' bin somewhere near the Suez Canal, this 'ere Garden erve Eden! Where there's camels, 'n' figs, 'n' dates—even p'raps pineapples. Just 'as ter fancy an apple. 'S'pose when these 'ere apples was first invented, they must'a' tasted marvellous. Funny 'ow yer get sick er things after a while. Things yer can eat, like—not bikes. Temptation with an apple. That there Eve! 'Go on,' she must'a' said, 'go on, it'll do yer good.' Summat like his mother with the cod-liver oil. If on'y God would er give 'im another chance . . . just another chance.

TWO days later, the little man didn't bother looking at the back of the papers at all. 'Listen, lad!' he cried excitedly. 'Ah could get thee a job. T'other lad got sack. Did summat t' t' bike. But thas'll 'ave ter work at neet.'

Danny gazed up at him spellbound. 'A bike,' he exclaimed, wonderstruck. 'Workin' proper like fer wages! Ridin' at night!'

'Come 'ere wi' me. Us'll go t' t' phone an' call this man,' said the little man eagerly.

Danny arrived at the place an hour before the time appointed. It was the most wonderful job in all the world. Mr Lewis, proprietor of The Hightown Picture Palace, looked down at him keenly. 'So you're the boy Mr Fletcher told me about?'

'Yes, sir,' he answered, his mouth full of the taste of rotten monkey-nuts.

The man scrutinised him carefully. Danny had been once to this place on a Saturday afternoon. It cost tuppence, and a lady gave you an orange as you went in. Sometimes some nutty nutty toffee, too. Across the doorway outside was a crude array of electric-bulbs, some of which flickered badly: LIVING PICTURES.

'Can you ride a bike?' the man asked, brows lifted.

'Me?' the lad returned scornfully. 'Ride

a bike? I could ride no-'anded!'

And the man said, 'Oh.' His fingers drummed on the table.

'How old are you, son?'

'I'm nearly twelve, sir.'

'Nearly . . .?'

Danny made no reply. A terrified look was in his eyes. After a pause he spoke up: 'Well, I'm not nearly twelve, sir, reely. I—I'm eleven and a quarter.'

'Eleven and a quarter?' Mr Lewis rubbed his chin. 'Is that all? Rather young, you know, son. I wanted a boy about fourteen at least.' Danny explained that he was a little more than eleven and a quarter, but only a bit.

'Coming back to this bike,' Mr Lewis continued. 'It's a good one, and was specially made for little boys like you. Boys with two hands. That's what the handlebars are for, see?'

Danny was sorry he had mentioned anything about this 'no-'anded' business. Drawing a finger across his throat he said with all the passion he could muster: 'God should cut me froat before I die if I dare ter even *fink* er ridin' no-'anded.'

'Seven shillings a week,' said Mr Lewis. 'You'll get a rise up to seven-and-six in a few weeks, if you're worth it.' And Mr Lewis was very stern as he said these words—just like the headmaster at the school where Danny showed up sometimes.

AND this was Danny's job. The Hightown Picture Palace and The Pioneer Pavilion both booked the same films. The same programme from the same reels was shown in each, though they were about five miles apart. The rental of films was pretty dear, but by this system the cost was halved.

Part One of *Ultus, the Man from the Dead*, was the very first spool of film that Danny carried. He mounted this marvellous bike on a rainy October night and rode off through the maze of twisting streets to The Pioneer. On his arrival, he was handed quickly and earnestly Part One of a two-part cowboy film. He soon rode off, head low, body crouching, and arrived back with minutes to spare.

Mr Lewis was waiting outside The Picture Palace, smoking a cigarette in a long, black holder. He appeared very calm and unconcerned, but Danny could see that he was anxious, really. He had the same look the

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little man had as he turned the paper to see the back page.

The operating-box was in the cinema itself, near the expensive seats—the fourpenny ones. In it the Pathé machine did its work of wonder. At the back was the arc-lamp. This was the light that threw its powerful ray through the gate where the film rapidly threaded its way. This arc-lamp contained two charcoal sticks, about nine inches long and an inch in diameter. By some electric contact, these things gave off this great beam as they touched. They were enclosed in a zinc box at the rear of the cinematograph machine.

Danny would stand inside and watch the operator—this marvellous man. And the film would run out. Quickly the gate would close, and in the same movement a slide was inserted. In a split-second the aperture was reopened. As Danny handed over his spool the operator began to thread it into the machine, this living-picture machine that had the word 'PATHE' written across it in gold letters.

'End of Part One,' read the slide, 'Part Two will follow immediately.' And Part Two *did* follow immediately, because Danny had ridden with it through the night, all the way from The Pioneer. He took the used spool, Part Three, and dashed out. And Mr Lewis, as though he were simply a passer-by, as if he didn't own the place at all, was again watching for his return. He was worried. 'Only a child, only a child!' he thought. 'Hope Fletcher was right,' he mumbled to himself.

At The Pioneer, too, Danny would watch the operator, who was even faster than their own. Reels of film were quickly rewound on two things that looked like typewriter spools, but were much larger. And the smell of the film made him think of the taste of pineapple-drops. Carefully, each reel would be placed in Danny's despatch-bag by the owner himself, Mr Mendelson. 'Good boy,' he would say. 'Be careful, and don't forget to ring your bell when you should.'

But Danny didn't mount at once. He went over to the lamp and adjusted the wick, that needed no adjustment. He was getting bold. This time his route was altered, and was not the shortest. He went down very dark streets purposely, to see his light at its best. That little light. 'My lamp wot shines when it's dark,' he said again to himself.

'See,' he whispered, 'wouldn't er saw that there redskin, only for me lamp.' And 'that there redskin' was a furniture-van that had suddenly loomed out of the gloom.

'Is Mr Mendelson well?' his boss asked quite casually, leaning against a poster.

'There's nowt ter matter with 'im,' Danny replied. He knew he was still on trial, that Mr Lewis wasn't sure of him. He was always waiting, smoking a cigarette.

THEN there was the Saturday matinee. Danny didn't care for this daytime stuff at all. It didn't do justice to his lamp and the importance of his work. Even the audience displeased him. They were not like grown-ups, who sometimes cried over a sad part he had ridden hard to bring. The night audience were real people, and quite a few regulars knew Danny and knew what he was doing. 'Here's the lad with Part Three. He's coming now,' he once heard a man say to a lady seated by him. Now and again as he made his way through the darkened place towards the operating-box a pencil of light from the arc-lamp would show up a person's face. As often as not, eyes would be looking at him in admiration, as if to say: 'Good lad! Wouldn't be able to see the next part at all, if it wasn't for you.'

But this matinee stuff, full of kids who shouted and chattered all the time, took the drama, the romance and adventure, out of it. And the way they booed the villain. And how they shouted 'Look out!' when a rustler was creeping up behind the Sheriff's back. No, Danny didn't like the Saturday afternoons. Tuppence to go in, and some toffee or an orange handed to them by Mrs Lewis at the paybox. It was awful, too, the way they giggled and hissed and made sucking noises with their mouths when Miss Mary or Miss Dorothy of the Bar 4 Ranch was taken in a cowboy's arms.

One night Mr Lewis was watching Gibbons, the odd-job man, sticking up a poster. 'Coming Thursday,' it read, *The Exploits of Elaine*. And along the bottom, in thick, red lettering, were the words, 'Who is the Clutching Hand?'

Mrs Cohen, the old lady who spoke Yiddish with a Scottish accent, always went in the expensive seats—the fourpenny ones. And she took the films to heart very much. When it was a sad story, and someone died, she

always cried. And she would talk to herself a lot. Once, when the men carrying the payroll were ambushed by outlaws and shot, she sobbed bitterly, and said 'O! Vey' a lot of times.

Jonathan, the boss's son, used to play the piano. When cowboys were riding desperately after Indians or Mexicans, he would play parts of a Rossini overture, or pieces from *Pique Dame*. At other times, it would be snatches out of *Light Cavalry*, or perhaps from *William Tell*. And the way he played was marvellous, and made it look like the picture was 'proper reel,' as Danny told his mother. Then there was the '*Liebestraume*' of Liszt for love scenes, or sometimes parts of a Strauss waltz.

Danny's mother was very proud. Each night she gave him sandwiches of bread and butter, all wrapped in greaseproof paper, which he had to fold up and bring back. Bring back for next time. To his little brothers he was a real hero. One day a balloon sailed over the district. In those days it was a common sight. The basket suspended by the ropes could plainly be seen. And as everyone looked up in wonder, Danny's baby brother shouted: 'Our Danny's in there, in that b'loon.'

Danny was earning eight whole shillings a week. Besides, Mr Mendelson gave him a shilling every Saturday night, and so did Mr Mather, his operator. But Danny never told about this.

BY now the serial film, *The Exploits of Elaine*, with Miss Pearl White and a man named Creighton Hale in the main parts, was in its sixth week. There were nine more weeks to go. And people used to wonder who this 'Clutching Hand' was. One night after the end of the first house, and with a scenic film about Switzerland in his bag, Danny left The Pioneer and rode home quickly because he had forgotten his sandwiches.

Dismounting at the door of his house, he left the bike at the kerb. Near by, Curly, together with Spider and the rest of his gang, were playing cricket in the lamplight with a homemade bat and the lamp-post for wickets. They were at play in a serious and tense manner, but on seeing Danny they relaxed and stopped. Danny and Curly were mortal enemies, and each hated the other with a

great hatred. Curly and his gang were the Bung-Fire Wood Robbers, who had stolen most of Danny's firewood for November the Fifth, which also coincided with his baby brother's birthday.

Danny didn't go in at once, but proceeded to pump air into the front tyre, though it was already hard. As he did this, he noticed three of the gang gazing quite openly at him and his wonderful bike. But Curly and Spider had turned and walked a little to the other side of the street, though they looked with sidelong glances over at the bike.

A sudden tenderness crept into Danny's soul. He shouldn't hate these lads. Maybe they didn't hate him either. Perhaps they had a respect for this ranger; this despatch-rider, who sped through the night with his precious load; this scout, who carried Eddie Polo, Cleo Madison, Henry B. Walthall, Maurice Costello, and William S. Hart on his back.

Another thing that struck him was that although it was nearing Bung-Fire Night, his timber had been left untouched, though unguarded, this year. Perhaps they had thought: 'Well, it wouldn't be fair to rob a feller like that—this lone rider; this ranger, who rides in the dark with Part Two, and Part Three, and Part Four.'

The boys of the gang came to the pictures at least once a week. Sometimes they paid, but mostly they 'pinched in' by a cunning ruse that shall not be divulged. And they were all wrapped up in that film, *The Exploits of Elaine*, and each one of them wondered who the 'Clutching Hand' was. They all knew that if it weren't for him riding through the night . . .

And who was this 'Clutching Hand'? No one would know for another five weeks, when the very last reel was shown. But Danny knew who this master criminal was, with the skeleton key. Mr Lewis had told him, and it was a great secret.

And a feeling of tolerance came over Danny as he left the house with his sandwiches. The boys were still there looking at the bike. The lamp was shining. And their glances from the wicket were not hostile. They had moved a few yards nearer, too from where they were before. Curly slouched back to the lamp-post, but the others remained where they stood.

And Danny was inspired, and he became enveloped in a dream. He was the night rider no longer, but William S. Hart, the

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Lone Rider of the Los Alamos Range. He left his horse where it stood at the kerb. His eyes were narrowed and grim, like his hero's—those eyes that had scanned the Ranges and the Painted Hills. He had just downed a full glass of whisky, neat, before crossing the river, in Santa Fé.

Slowly, with each hand at the holsters, he walked up to Curly, the Mexican, and his cattle-rustlers. And the white star sewn on his bag with the word 'Palace' was no longer there: 'Sheriff' it read, instead. They waited tensely as the gringo approached.

'Reckon you hombres can use our timber,' he said through tight lips. 'Come and get it, any time.' What did he want with Bung-Fire wood? A Rider of the Purple Sage; a Wanderer of the Wasteland! And they all stared, wonderstruck.

'Got ter ride the Ranges,' he drawled, through the taut lips of William S. Hart, looking over at his pony, Lightning. 'So long, pardners,' he said. 'Headin' fer the Yuma Trail, and them Painted Hills. So long, men!' he repeated. As he mounted, Lightning reared up wildly, but soon came down again, pounding his hoofs in anger with the passionate blood of him eager to get away—away on the Yuma Trail, and tham thar Painted Hills.

'So long, Sheriff,' they murmured dreamily, as he rode off. And a buzzard slit the blue.

THE next week was very important. Mr Lewis and the man at The Pioneer had plunged heavily on a super-film. *Sins of the Parents* it was called; a Jewish story, with Vera Gordon in the leading role. It was a long picture—six parts. So that week there were no comics or scenic shorts. The big feature came on right away, after Mr Lewis's son had played some Jewish melodies.

Mrs Cohen was there every night, weeping bitterly because it was a sad picture about a poor trousers-presser who had worked hard for years to let his son study medicine. Then the son became a great man. He was famous. But although his father was ill he could not save him, because he had 'inside trouble.' And when the old man was dying it took a long time. His wonderful son stood by the bed sobbing. It was a very sad picture. One night Mrs Cohen was crying so loud she might have been at a proper funeral. Mr Lewis went up to her gently and said: 'Mrs

Cohen . . . Please . . . Don't take it so much to heart. . . . You're crying so loud. . . . If you feel so bad, please go home.'

'I should go home?' she sobbed in anger. 'I should go home? Just now, while the poor man is dying from the operation?'

And Mrs Healy, the Irish friend of Mrs Cohen, shouted out: 'Go 'long—g'way outa that—the cheek of you!'

Mr Lewis crept away. It took such a long time for this little man to die. Very slow it was, not like the way cowboys, Indians, and Mexicans died. When Mrs Cohen had been approached, it was only Part Four, and the old man wouldn't be dead until Part Five, which Danny would bring.

It was Thursday night. The place was full—mostly with women, who had come from outlying districts and were not regular patrons. They had all heard about this poor trousers-presser and his wonderful son. Not since *The Woman Who Did*, in four parts, had there been such business at The Picture Palace. That was the time Danny got to know the meaning of the word 'Adult,' because across all the posters in bright-red letters were the words 'For Adults Only.'

Danny was about to ride off with Part Three. But Mr Lewis had again resumed the habit of waiting outside in that feigned non-chalant manner. 'Good boy!' he said. 'Good boy! Is The Pioneer packed?'

And Danny said he didn't know.

On this night Danny rode as he never rode before. He was inspired. An old man was dying, and the people of the city were waiting anxiously—waiting for this rider who was carrying a special medicine that would maybe save his life.

AS he was leaving The Pioneer with Part Five he hesitated a moment while the billposter stuck up next week's feature. It was an extra-large poster that went up in sections. The first piece showed a horse's head and part of a sunset. The next gave a little more of the horse, and half a cowboy's hat. Maybe it would be all right to wait and see it all go up. Him and Lightning could easily make up for lost time. Soon the horse was complete and, later still, the cowboy too.

And it was his hero. His god. It was William S. Hart. Gimlet-eyed, tight-lipped, and angry. In each hand a gun—a shootin' iron. And tiny wisps of silver grey curled

lazily from the barrels. 'Coming Next Week,' it read; 'Twice Nightly. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.' And then the name of the film was stuck along the top: TO THE LAST MAN. And underneath, two other words: 'ZANE GREY.'

Danny was dream-beguiled, and mounted Lightning, and rode away. 'Got ter be in time with the payroll,' he said. 'Got ter be in time . . . be there soon . . . and meet the boys in the Red Rock Saloon.'

But this was only a drifting dream. The Painted Hills and the Yuma Trail were blurred and misty. Even Lightning seemed nervous and scared. Now and again he stopped and reared in that way Danny loved. 'Must'a bin some er thar thar coyotes, or even rattlesnakes,' he said. 'Oughter bin thar by now,' he muttered through chattering teeth. 'The men are waitin' fer the payroll.' 'Danny always showed up,' a Texas ranger said. 'Guess he'll be here any minute. Ride into town soon. He sure will, sure will, and be right here in this saloon,' said Oklahoma Jake, in that loud voice of his. '£4. 19. 6. . . Couldn't never do it, son. . . Never. . .'

And Jonathan Lewis was holding out like the last man of a trapped battalion. Holding off the enemy . . . ragtime tunes. . . 'Come on and hear! Come on and hear, Alexander's Ragtime Band!' . . . waltz songs . . . stirring marches . . . Yiddish songs . . . everything.

'End of Part Four' had appeared almost half-an-hour ago. And the people were sobbing—not because Danny hadn't shown up yet, but because the poor trousers-presser was dying. They gave the impression of crying in comfort. Practically all of them knew that the old man would really die in Part Five that Danny had. It had got around about this picture. There wasn't a woman in the place who wasn't aware. But still they waited to see the next part with the funeral.

DANNY had dismounted and was feeling his way in the smoky fog. He couldn't see. 'Proper dark, reel bad,' he said in fear. His lamp remained alight. He adjusted the wick. It needed no adjustment. The reeling grey of its beam still shone with a baffled bravery.

'Must'a' come right over the river,' he thought. 'This is sure Mexico, I reckon.' His teeth were knocking together, and in the

rain, which had come on, the cone of his light had an eeriness reminiscent of the 'Clutching Hand.'

He walked for over a mile, but it was of no avail. The Canyon Kid, for whom even the Petrified Forest held no terrors, was lost. Lost to the world, with a payroll of 3000 dollars in golden coin. And the boys who believed in him were waiting.

'Maybe thar thar fellers oughter send a posse out ter find me,' he shivered. 'If William S. Hart was only here, I reckon we'd pull through. Guess this is Death Valley—the Valley that God Forgot.' But William S. Hart did not come. Had he but known, he and Fleetfoot would have made the ride of their lives.

'The Mojave Desert,' he muttered, 'where there's no water.' Fifty dollars a pint it was, Buckskin Pete of the Bar 2 had once told him.

The Wanderer of the Wasteland, the Lone Star Ranger, was lost. Lost on a phantom range. He went down on one knee in front of the glare, and looked straight into it, his eyes almost touching the glass. The magnified glass. He walked for miles, hoping he'd strike the trail again. A horse-trough loomed out of the void. He drank greedily out of his cowboy's hat. And Lightning drank, too.

'What's that? . . . What? . . . Navajos trackin' the Paleface Rider with the payroll. . . . Money for firewater?' Soon, a hand on each gun, he muttered: 'If they get me I'll go—I'll go out—like a ranger.' It was only a horse neighing.

He made his way wearily until he stumbled on a stable. And the straw was very soft and warm, and the smell of leather and of horses was good. So nice. . . Warm. . .

His mother was taking off his wet boots and sodden clothes. She brought him to the fire, where a kipper was grilling. And the fire had a lovely glow, summat like the sky when it's nearly night-time in Colorado.

' . . . parcel. . . Last Edition.' Suddenly he awoke shivering. His light had become dim. It was feeble, guttering. 'Try ter stay alight till mornin' . . . till ter-morrer . . . when it's sun-up time . . . till I can see the trail agen . . . the Yuma Trail . . . and we'll both ride back . . . back 'ome agen.' He cried himself to sleep.

'All the world wondered.' 'Daniel Molloy, pay attention!' 'Sir Walter Scott . . . and Sir Lancelot.' 'Football Final . . . Flodden Field.'

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'DAD,' Danny said haltingly, 'Dad, would Mr Lewis give me another chance?'

'No, son.' His dad raised his eyes from the bend of leather he was cutting. 'No, son, he wouldn't. Had to give all the people their money back,' he told him, averting his gaze, and looking at a man in the street who was sharpening knives on a grindstone.

Danny fixed his eyes on the criss-cross lines on his dad's neck—lines yer could play noughts and crosses on, he thought. 'Are yer sure, dad? A last chance?'

'No, son—no,' he said, head low, looking down on the bend of leather. Somehow the knife stuck. He withdrew it and threw it

limply on the bench. 'No, son—no,' he repeated. 'You wouldn't never—get it.'

The bike shop-window look in Danny's eyes was fading. 'Are yer reely sure, dad? Reely? Not even a last chance?'

There was no reply. His dad gazed ahead of him, puffing at his empty pipe. And the boys in the Red Rock Saloon had gone away. Gone, to the last man. Buckskin Pete, Oklahoma Jake, and Miguel and his crowd, and all. The Yuma Trail and the Painted Hills had slowly drifted away. Never no more would the Wanderer of the Wasteland wonder while he wandered. The Lone Star Ranger never rode again.

The World's Youngest Volcano

A Close-up of Paricutin

Colonel P. T. ETHERTON

THE world has some spectacular sights to offer, but I doubt if there is a finer one than a volcano in full blast, belching steam, lava, and sulphurous fumes, columns of smoke and fire pouring from the crater, shooting up like rockets, with the steam and smoke rolling over and darkening the countryside. This is what I had the luck to see a short time ago in Mexico. The volcano happened to be the youngest in the world, and the only one since the dawn of history that scientists have been able to study from the beginning. Its name is Paricutin and its evolution is remarkable, for it sprung out of a cornfield one afternoon seven years ago.

Paricutin is the modern Vesuvius. Both volcanoes appeared on the scene with about the same amount of advance warning, and both engulfed the villages at their feet. The two volcanoes were the object of vivid speculation and inquiry among contemporary human beings. The volcano of the New World, like

that of the Old, will leave its lava and its pockmarks upon history.

As I was in Mexico, I made up my mind to go and see Paricutin and put myself on a more than nodding acquaintance with the world's youngest volcano. Paricutin in spite would, naturally, be a far more thrilling experience than Vesuvius in sleep, but the realisation of my project far surpassed anything I could have imagined. Briefly, the story of the volcano is this.

ONE morning in February 1943 a peasant, Pulido by name, went up from the village of Paricutin to pasture some of his sheep on the spot where the volcano now erupts day and night. Rumbly and strange subterranean noises had, indeed, been going on for some days, the ground was in a state of tremor, and smoke and steam came out of fissures in the earth, illumined at night by

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jets of flame. The villagers looked at all this, but they were not frightened; on the contrary, they rather enjoyed the spectacle, for it was vivid and full of fireworks on a small scale, and there is nothing the Mexican peasant likes better than fireworks. They figure at all festivals, and if the Mexican countryside could have its way, life would go on like that—in calm beatitude and fireworks. But on the afternoon in question matters reached a climax; the ground suddenly opened and a column of fire shot out. At the sight of the outburst, and scared almost out of their wits, Pulido and his wife ran for all they were worth to warn the others in the village about two miles away, if, indeed, they wanted warning. All the time that they were hastening towards the village the darkening clouds from the new-born volcano increased. The earth shook beneath them, even the hills took on a new aspect, and to Pulido's distorted imagination seemed to tremble, whilst every moment fresh bursts shot skyward. By the time they reached Paricutin the ascending column of fire appeared to go ever higher, and they heard the hiss and crash of lava, showing that the volcano had opened in earnest. In fact, the pressure of steam from inside, which had doubtless been long pent up and seeking an outlet, built a cone which within a week was six hundred feet high. Thereafter, it went on growing, with a continuous succession of eruptions, the whole countryside shaking with explosions that heralded the opening of the world's latest chimney.

Each day and night the volcano stepped up its output; billions of tons were shot out until, when I was there, the lava-beds extended outwards from the base to a distance of four miles, with an average depth of sixty to seventy feet. It may be more, as near the crater the lava is of great depth.

When the volcano had fairly got into its stride, exploding hurricanes of rocks, stones, mud, and ashes, with columns of steam and sulphurous gases, the Mexican authorities decided to evacuate the people from the doomed village. They despatched a force of soldiers, complete with equipment and lorries, but the most difficult task was to get the people to quit the place they had known all their lives and where their forefathers had lived before them. They were completely bewildered, and clung to their homes up to the last minute, with the lava creeping on

relentlessly, about three yards in an hour. Imagine this lofty wall of fire, slowly and pitilessly overwhelming the land, swallowing the pine-forests, eating up the countryside, and then the waves, red-hot and sizzling, reaching the outskirts of the village. There was the wall of fire in front of them; it was evident that the last hope of saving their homes had gone. A final frantic appeal was made; the people came out armed with picks and shovels and in desperation dug crosses in the ground, hoping thereby to appease the saints and secure their intervention, but to all this the lava was completely deaf. Nothing availed; the fiery wall crept slowly on. A film of this tragic scene, taken by my friend, the intrepid Dr Ordóñez, the Mexican authority on volcanology, shows the lava within thirty yards of the village. I have seen many strange and shattering things during travels on the five continents, but nothing quite like this—a slow-motion film of slow-motion destruction.

Still the villagers had a pathetic belief in the saints, the bells, and images in the 16th-century church, which now lies beneath the lava, only the top of the tower sticking out, gaunt and lonely. The folk refused to go without the precious relics, and so the patient authorities removed the bells and the images and evacuated them with the people. The end came soon. Paricutin village vanished beneath the lava and now lies buried sixty feet below it.

WITH all that had happened, I was keen to see the volcano that had grown out of a cornfield, and so we headed for Uruapan, a town forty-one miles from Paricutin. Some distance from there we left the main road and went by a forest track, taking, for this last lap of eighteen miles, an American car capable of standing up to the shocks of incredibly bad going. For that eighteen miles we crashed and bumped over the roughest road I have ever been on. The ground was strewn with ash; in places it was four to five inches deep, and looked like black snow. The trees and brushwood, miles away from the volcano, were seared by this ash; here and there they tried to push their way up and out of it, only to be overwhelmed by a fresh coating. Strangled by ash they soon succumbed. I examined this dust; it was as fine as pepper, so fine that geologists say that nearly twenty

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thousand particles make only a single grain in weight. At last we came to open, rising ground where a few huts were clustered that had escaped the devastating march of the lava. We got out and sat down on a bench in front of the huts.

Never did any seat command a grander view, or one more awe-inspiring. It was the box-seat whence we surveyed, close up, the spectacle of Paricutin. We were looking at a volcano in the making; in front of us, about four thousand yards away, towered this cone of fire, eleven hundred feet in height, and with a crater eleven hundred and fifty feet in diameter. It was a compelling, incredible sight, with the uprush of smoke and fire which streamed outwards, throwing shadows over the adjacent hills and blotting out the sky above. We just sat there and gazed, seeing something which the eye of man has rarely rested upon. The world seemed full of thunderous noises; the power of them was beyond any description, and as the sun was disappearing behind the hills to the west the rushing volume of fire and smoke grew thicker and more abundant, and the awfulness of the scene became more intense.

As there was still about an hour of daylight, we went down from the tiny plateau and walked below the wall of lava, here about thirty-five feet high. It was the colour of pumice-stone, and the size of some of the pieces amazed me. An expert with us estimated that some of them weighed not less than forty tons; one piece was shaped like a huge salmon and could not, our friend said, have weighed less than seventy tons. What the size and weight of the lump was before it left the crater, to smash up into smaller bits on the slopes of the volcano, we just could not imagine.

I wanted to get as close to the crater as possible. I knew it was dangerous work, but anything worth having takes a lot of getting. We went back to the bench where we saw a small Indian boy who said he could pilot us over the lava towards the 'Monster,' as the volcano is known locally. Following him, we mounted the wall, where the lava was comparatively cool, and got on to the bed which stretched away to the foot of the crater. It was like walking over upturned razor-blades, with the blades hot and a sulphurous smoke rising all the time. Those

who have done it will know what hazardous and thirsty work it is! I have been on more cheerful places than that lava-bed. Resting every now and again, we pushed on until held up by a crescent-shaped barrier of lava. We were by this time a mile and a half from the crater and could see its steep sides and the vents, or openings, lower down from the summit.

As darkness fell, the avalanche of fire increased; its vivid and scorching glare could be felt, and no rainbow could ever rival the varied colours, mostly a lurid crimson, spreading far and wide and lighting up the land. The bombs and boulders that emerged from deep down in the earth resembled great rockets; they fell on the slope, broke into fragments, and, gleaming like live coals, cascaded downwards. Each successive eruption was preceded by a puff, similar to that of a locomotive shunting-engine, and then with a roar the columns shot skywards. There was no moon that night and the darkness wrapped us as in a veil, but through it the volcano shone, a tower of fire. Then came things like tracer-shells, thousands of them, with an overall display of dazzling lights. The reverberations from inside the crater, the continuous rush of fiery material skywards, the crash of falling bombs, the darkening masses of smoke and sulphurous clouds, the rockets and tracer-shells, the red-hot cascades down the slopes—it all comes back vividly to my mind.

We stayed part of the night by the volcano, and as the hours went on so it increased its output, until towards midnight it seemed to be rising to a crescendo; the whole country round was ablaze with an incandescent display, with explosions that shook the very ground on which we stood, or rather crouched. Night painted the volcano with varied colours. The fountain of fire was working up to some unknown climax. We felt we had seen enough, and thought it best to get away whilst the going was good. It was a blundering and painful job, but we reached the car at last, and went back to Uruapan. The headlights shining through the ash-blurred grass threw weird shadows along the road. Every little while the blackened trunk of a tree flashed out from the shadowland like a colossal milestone, to be lost again in a second or two in the darkness behind. Paricutin—I would not have missed seeing it for anything.

Drinks and Drinking

G. W. COPELAND

THE earliest type of building, of which there is any definite record, in which our national beverage, beer, was first brewed, and whence it could be eventually obtained, was the lord's brewhouse, or church-house. This was not an inn, as we understand the term nowadays, but a kind of place of entertainment for the parish. In other words, it resembled its descendant, the parish hall, where the modern church bazaar was represented by the parish feast, held with more or less profit to the adjoining church, and where ale might often be bought. Many such church-houses are the direct ancestors of those inns found near churches and which now bear the name 'Church House Inn' or 'Church Inn.' Broadly speaking, then, the inn of to-day, and especially the typical country inn, maintains in its present function a tradition unbroken since the 12th century. Its origin lay in the lord's, or common, brewhouse, at which liquor could be bought, and which was held in common by the tenant of a manor, who usually paid for its use a quarterly rent to the lord of the manor. Among its many designations were scot-ale house, tap-house, give-ale house, church-ale house, parish-house, and ale-house, in addition to church-house.

A list of the contents of a typical church-house may be of interest. From an inventory delivered to the churchwardens of Yatton, Somerset, in 1492, we learn that the church-house there contained a kettle, or great brewing-cauldron; two great crocks, or earthenware pots; two smaller crocks; four pans; a bottom for a pan; a brandiron, or gridiron; five tun-vats; a keeve-vat, or tub for brewing; two troughs; nine stands for barrels; twenty-one trendles, or brewer's coolers; and six tablecloths.

This church-house, however, was a mere brewhouse. A church-house proper contained

still more, and was indeed more than a brewhouse. Thus, from 1492 to 1545 it had a chamber, sometimes called the high chamber, which contained forms and trestles, and which was on an upper floor; and it had also a broach, or spit, and a cowle, or measure for ale. In 1473 it had a well lined with stone, probably used for brewing, with a bucket and an iron chain. In 1508 this was called the church-well. In 1516 the churchwardens accounted for ten yards of crest-cloth, a kind of linen used for making meat-cloths for the church-house. In 1517 it had a pump, and seges, seats, or benches; in 1526 a dozen and a half drinking-bowls; in 1528 a fireplace with a clavey, or wooden lintel; in 1531 two kilderkins, or small casks, two salt-cellar, and a ladle. In 1555 it was let to a tenant.

This summary of the growth of a particular brewhouse and church-house and its contents represents, one may safely assume, the progress of institutions of a similar nature elsewhere. Some even had a garden, and we learn that the stock of trenchers, cups, bowls, etc., was constantly being replaced by the churchwardens. From a common brewhouse, therefore, the church-house rapidly became a regular inn and place of entertainment.

Usually the church-house stood very near to the parish church, and even abutted into the churchyard itself. In 1636 we hear of a feast being kept 'in the Church-house joyning to the Church.' Whether 'joyning' meant actually annexed to the church or not, it suffices to explain what most of us must have noticed—the very close proximity sometimes of an old inn to the parish church. In 1593 Nashe wrote: 'Hath not the diuell hys Chappell close adioning to God's Church?' And in 1596 Nashe again wrote: 'As like a Church and an alehouse, God and the diuell, they manie times dwell neere together.' Thus

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the alehouse of the village came to be nicknamed 'the devil's chapel.' Indeed, ale was on occasion sold in the church itself, or in an annexed building, and probably the church-house, where church feasts were held and their impedimenta stored, became a place of entertainment which God-fearing villagers looked upon as a hotbed of paganism.

THE number of drinks of a more or less potent nature of which our ancestors partook seems to have been both very great and very varied. There were mead, which was brewed from honey, and the manufacture of which has recently been revived at Gulval, in Cornwall; metheglin; white metheglin; and hippocras, or ypcras. The last-named was a late mediæval cordial made from Lisbon and Canary wines, bruised spices, and sugar, and was so called because it was strained through Hippocrates' sleeve, a device in the form of a woollen bag, or a square piece of flannel folded cornerwise, through which old-time apothecaries strained their various mixtures and decoctions. It was named after the famous Greek physician of the 5th century B.C. Falstaff on his deathbed 'cried out of sack.' This, perhaps the best-known of the ancient drinks, a catalogue of which would be too long, was a Spanish wine, a kind of sherry, and may, perhaps, have been called 'sack' because it was dry (French *sec*), but not seemingly, as some have held, because it was customary to transport it in sacks of Spanish goatskin. Whatever the real origin of the name may be, it seems to be fairly certain that sack was a favourite tipple in Shakespeare's day.

The expression 'to drink a toast' reminds us that it used to be the practice to allow a piece of toast to float upon the beverage in the bowl when such a complimentary drink was proposed. Of the chief malt liquors, ale, beer, and twopenny, the first has nothing to do with wassail, the ancient toast salutation, the word coming from the Middle English *wæs hæil*, corresponding to the Old English *wes hæl*, 'be in good health.' Ale itself derives from the West-Saxon *ealu*, connected with the Old Norse *öl* and the Lithuanian *alus*.

The annual custom of passing round the wassail-bowl, says Geoffrey of Monmouth, originated in the greeting which Rouix or Rowen, identified by some with Rowena, the daughter of the Saxon Hengist, bestowed

on her father when the latter invited the British king, Vortigern, to a banquet. At the command of this sovereign, Rowena entered the royal presence with a bowl of wine, and welcomed the visitor with the words: '*Lauerd king, wæs hæil!*' to which, probably with the help of an interpreter, the reply '*Drinc hæil!*' was given. The reply meant: 'Drink good health!', and was used in conjunction with '*Wæs hæil*,' signifying, as has been said, 'Be in good health.' According to a chronicle, the Life of Edward II, ascribed to Sir Thomas de la More or Moore, these two expressions were the usual phrases employed while quaffing among the earliest civilised inhabitants of these islands, and they have come down to us as 'Good health!' and its many equivalents.

The Saxons appear to have drunk good cider on many occasions at their wassails. The practice of passing round the wassail-bowl is now defunct, but it has its descendant in the usage observed at certain corporation festivals at which loving-cups are circulated. In this country it was the custom to carry the wassail-bowl from door to door on New Year's Day. Polwhele, the historian of Devonshire, composed in honour of the wassail-bowl a verse in which he mentions lamb's wool, a drink made of apple-juice roasted with spiced ale.

'A Carroll for the Wassell-Bowl,' written for the wassailers of Staffordshire and Warwickshire, begins as follows:

*A jolly Wassel-bowl,
A Wassel of good ale,
Well fare the butler's soul,
That setteth this to sale;
Our jolly Wassel.*

It continues for another eleven verses. Another song, sung on New Year's Eve in Gloucestershire, commences:

*Wassail! Wassail! over the town,
Our toast it is white, our ale it is brown:
Our bowl it is made of a maplin tree,
We be good fellows all; I drink to thee.*

And so on, for another five verses, during which the principal members of the family, including a cow, are toasted.

TO return to beer and ale. A beverage made from barley is mentioned by Tacitus and Herodotus, this showing the

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antiquity of barley broth, but it was not until 1524 that hops were introduced from Holland and used for brewing. Their use was prohibited by Act of Parliament in 1528, but the prohibition quickly lapsed. The terms beer and ale are loosely applied, but whereas beer may be ale, ale is not necessarily beer, a word deriving from the Middle English *ber*, Old English *béor*, and connected with the German *bier* and the Icelandic *björr*. A 10th-century Scandinavian poem states that the beverage was 'called ale among men; but by the gods called beer.' In some parts of England beer includes ale, porter, and stout, while in other localities ale denotes the stronger malt brews and beer the weaker, and again elsewhere the other way round.

Strong ale in 1552 had a variety of names—Dagger ale (so named from the Dagger tavern in Holborn, London), huffcap, dragon's milk, and merry-go-down. Old strong ale was, and still is, known as stingo; whereas strong ale brewed from wheat malt flavoured with aromatic herbs was called mum. Ale is brewed from pale malt, whence its light colour; porter and stout are made from malt more highly dried.

A drink concocted from hot ale, spice, sugar, and toast was known as ale-bre, whence aleberry; and we also hear of hopped ale; the heated, spiced, and sweetened mulled ale, not to be confused with mould ale, the hot ale which it was customary to drink at funerals; and white ale, in the Kingsbridge district of Devon, a 'hot and rebellious liquor' compounded of malt, hops, eggs, flour, and grout, which, when 'tuned,' or warmed, with old Jamaica rum, with nutmeg added, was alleged to be a certain cure for a cold, and to induce a glorious optimism in its consumer!

Ales earned many of their former specific names from the ceremonies, revels, and feasts with which and from people with whom they were for so long associated. Thus we have church-ale, Whitsun ale, midsummer ale, clerk-ale, lamb-ale, help-ale, bid-ale, christening-ale, give-ale, and bride-ale, whence 'bridal.'

Further, there were such terms as ale-dagger, a weapon used in self-defence in alehouse brawls; ale-draper, the keeper of an alehouse; ale-drapery, the selling of ale; ale-silver, the annual fee formerly paid to the Lord Mayor for the privilege of selling ale within the City of London; ale-stake, the bush or broom used to indicate that an estab-

lishment sold ale; ale-wife, the landlady of an alehouse; and ale-knight, a tippler or sot.

There appears to be no etymological connection between beer, barley, and barm or berham, in spite of similarity and association; and a brewster meant originally a female brewer. Mention should also be made of clear ale, or lithe beer, both single and double, or double-double, of Elizabethan times. Small beer is a second extract obtained from the malt; broken beer is soured beer; and porter, really porter's ale or porter's beer, but about 1750 abbreviated to porter, was initially a nourishing beverage suitable for porters and other hard-working people, and the London porters' favourite drink.

Half twopenny ale and half beer, or half porter and half ale, is called 'half-and-half'; 'cooper,' as coopers were allowed daily portions of stout and porter, was usually half stout and half porter; while 'three head' consisted of a third of ale, a third of beer, and a third of twopenny, drawn from separate casks. 'Entire' indicated that the three liquors were previously introduced into the cask and thence drawn as one.

According to Brewer in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, the single X on a cask formerly denoted that the beer within had paid the old 10s. duty, and was thus a beer of a given quality. More than one X therefore became a trade-mark to show that the beer was as many times as strong as the one which had paid the duty. On the other hand, the X may have a monastic origin, as it is well known that the monks of old were skilful amateur brewers. Of the Abbot of Burton-upon-Trent it has been sung:

*The Abbot of Burton brewed good ale
On Fridays, when they fasted;
But the Abbot of Burton never tasted his own
As long as his neighbour's lasted.*

The principal wines known to our forefathers were muscadell, a rich wine; malmsey, imported from Spain, Italy, and Madeira; deal, a Rhenish wine; gascony; alicant, a Spanish mulberry wine; canary, a sweet sack; sherry, an unsweetened sack; rumney, a Greek wine; and guienne, a French wine.

Of compounded beverages, the forerunners of the cocktails of to-day, there were, besides lamb's wool, already referred to, posset, of hot milk curdled with ale; piment, of wine with spice or honey; copus, of hot beer, wine, and spice; syllabubs, of wine or cider,

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with cream or milk; punch, of wine or spirit, water or milk, lemons, sugar, spice, etc.; alegar, of malt vinegar; and egg-flip, beer-flip, and ale-bre. Toddy is, of course, spirits and hot water, sweetened and flavoured; and a bever (cf. beverage, from Latin *bibere*, Old French *beivre*) indicated any potent drink taken between meals.

A SHORT list of drinking-vessels and containers will indicate their variety: skulls; horns; mazers, large drinking-bowls, originally of a hard wood, probably maple, the word deriving from the Old French *masere*, of like meaning; sealed quarts; peg- or pin-cups; peg-tankards; tygs, many-handled vessels; graybeards or bellarmine, large Flemish stoneware jugs bearing caricatures of Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621), a leader in the Roman Catholic Counter-reformation; Toby-jugs; posset-pots; Pretender glasses; frog-mugs; puzzle-jugs; whistle drinking-cups; punch-bowls; leathern bottles; black-jacks, vessels commonly used at drinking-bouts; bombards or bumbards; cannikins; stoups; cans; and pottles, two-quart vessels.

One of the most interesting is the peg-tankard, a tankard with projecting pegs at different levels inside to mark off various capacities, and to indicate how far to drink when the tankard was passed round. Hence the expression 'to be a peg too low.' As a pin served the same purpose as the peg, we had 'to be on' or 'in a merry pin.'

The loving-cup or grace-cup also deserves mention. It was not unlike a tyg, in that it had two or three handles, but it was of more monumental proportions, and was passed round at formal banquets, usually after grace, whence its alternative name. At the Lord Mayor of London's banquet, and at the banquets of the City of London Companies, the loving-cup is a two-handled silver bowl, with a napkin tied to one of the handles. Two persons stand, one to drink, the other to defend the drinker. After his draught, the first drinker wipes the bowl with the napkin, and then passes it to his defender, when the next man rises to defend the new drinker; and so on till the end.

A bumper is a glass or cup so fully filled that the liquid forms a bump, as it were, at the top, and there may be connection also with the large drinking-vessel bombard, mentioned above, but that there is any reference

to the action of monks drinking to the health of their fraternity as *un bon père*—that is, a good father—is to be counted as nothing but fancy. A rummer was a tall cylindrical glass with a stem, used in the 17th century for drinking toddy. A hunter's hoop was a drinking-vessel marked with 'hoops,' which presumably served the same purpose as pegs. A stirrup-cup was the drink partaken of at parting—a parting cup. In casks, there were, and still are, tuns (252 wine gallons), pipes (126 wine gallons), and hogsheads (63 wine gallons, or 52½ imperial gallons).

A FEW words used in connection with actual drinking are interesting. To hobnob means to drink familiarly with one another, and is a form of *habnab*, from the Anglo-Saxon *habban*, to have, and *nabban*, not to have. To carouse means to drink deeply, from the German *garaus*, right out, or completely. Thus, 'to drink carouse' is equivalent to drinking a bumper, or indulging in a drinking-bout, while it would appear that the Shakespearean 'to drink a rouse,' with the same meaning, is really a misrendering of the phrase.

In the days when drinking was a fine art, various means were resorted to for increasing a toper's thirst, such as shoeing-horns, gloves, and flapdragons, small combustible bodies lighted at one end and set afloat on the surface of the liquor.

Tipplers of the 16th century had an amazing variety of names: for example, a good fellow; a boon companion; a mad Greek; a true Trojan; a stiff blade; one that is steel to the back; a Low Country soldier; one who drinks deep though it be a mile to the bottom; one who knows how the cards are dealt; one that will be aflush of all four; one that bears up stiff; one whom the brewer's horse hath bit; one that lays down his ears and drinks; one that drinks upsee, or upsy, Freeze—that is, after the Frisian fashion; etc. The well-known phrase 'half-seas over' means half or nearly drunk, the expression, which may originally have been the genitive 'half sea's over,' signifying halfway across the sea. For the theory that the words are a corruption of *op-zee zoer*, over-sea beer, a heady drink imported from Holland, there appears to be but little confirmation. To drink swinishly, like a Dutchman of old, was to 'drink Friesland beer.'

The terms employed to indicate that a person is in wine, drunk, or intoxicated are, old and new, almost endless: boozed, or boosy; chock-full; breezy; cupshot; cast away; elevated; pot-valiant; overtaken; maudlin—in allusion to pictures in which Mary Magdalen is represented weeping; groggy; tight; squiffy; slewed; canned; fuddled; flustered; tipsy; top-heavy; in drink; in his cups; under the table; in a merry pin; a little in the suds; to have taken liquor until it seems to run out of his eyes in tears (Oxford); to have business on both sides of the street (Cambridge); to be unable to sport a right line (Cambridge); to heel a little; to be three sheets in the wind; to have been in a storm; to be winged; to have a spur in his head; to show his hobnails; to chase geese; to see double; to make W's; not to be able to see a hole through a ladder; to have had a drop too much; to have had one over the eight; to be lit up; to have copped the brewer. Several of these have a

strong nautical or sporting flavour. In addition, one can be as drunk as a fiddler—fiddlers at wakes and fairs, and on board ship, were paid in liquor; as a lord; as a Chloe, the bibulous wife of a cobbler of Linden Grove; as David's, or Davy's, sow; as a mouse (Chaucer); as a rat; as a beggar (Massinger); as a tinker; as an owl; as a boiled owl, and so on.

Finally, according to different authorities, there were, and presumably still are, various stages or degrees of drunkenness: (1) perky; (2) irritable; (3) mellow; (4) pugnacious, (5) affectionate; (6) lachrymose; (7) collapse. According to Magnan: (1) slight excitement and well-being; (2) crowded and confused ideas; (3) incoherence, perversion of taste and smell, thick speech, vacant countenance, and staggering gait; (4) coma; (5) death. According to Nashe: (1) ape-drunk; (2) lion-drunk; (3) swine-drunk; (4) sheep-drunk; (5) martin-drunk; (6) goat-drunk; (7) fox-drunk.

The Camel at Mek

GWYN GRIFFIN

'YOU now own all the camels in the Division,' said the outgoing Police Commandant munificently as we completed the handing-over ceremonies with a couple of beers in the Greek bar near the office. 'All thirty-two—no, thirty-three of them!'

'Thirty-two!' I corrected promptly. 'I counted them twice.'

'Thirty-two here, yes,' he agreed patiently, 'and one at Mek.'

'One at Mek?'

'One at Mek.'

'Where's Mek?'

'Oh, a long way away. In Connor's Division, right down the coast. About two huts

and three goats, I believe.'

'Then surely the camel belongs to Connor?'

'No, it doesn't—at least, only half. It's rather complicated really, but what it comes to is that he's responsible for it, but that I—that is you now, of course—own it. Don't ask me what it's doing there, for I haven't a clue. All I know is that it's been there for years. Sometimes we get a letter about it, so I keep a file for it somewhere in the office—you'll find it in one of the drawers.'

SIX weeks later a letter came from Connor. It was mostly to do with his whisky

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ration, which appeared to have gone astray. The letter ended on a querulous note: 'Furthermore, I am informed that for over a month no rations have arrived for the camel at Mek. Please put them, and all back-issues, on the next mail-boat down the coast.' Filled with guilt, I hid the letter in the depths of the 'Pending' tray and personally saw to the dispatch of eight bales of hay and four sacks of maize.

Later that day I accosted my second-in-command, a large and somnolent Italian Police-sergeant. 'Ferrana!' I addressed him by name.

'Yes, Tenente?'

'About this camel at Mek.'

'Camel at Mek?'

'Yes. Do you know what it's doing there?'

'Doing at Mek?'

'Yes, doing there! Come on, take a hold of yourself!'

'It's doing nothing,' replied Ferrana sulkily.

'Then why's it there?'

'Hell, I don't know!'

I took him to the Greek bar and bought him a beer. It was in office hours and strictly against regulations. 'Look, Ferrana, I'm worried about that camel at Mek.'

'Why?'

'Well, for one thing it hasn't had anything to eat for a month.'

'It must be formidably thin by now,' observed Ferrana callously.

'I've just rushed supplies to it. They'll be there in a few days. Do you think it could come home for a bit?'

Ferrana stared into his glass like a magician into his crystal. Whatever he saw did not appear to please him. He shook his head ponderously. 'No, Tenente. That camel must stay. Anyhow, we couldn't get it back. It must have got there by dhow in the first place.'

'Then a dhow can go and get it.'

'But—'

'No "buts," Ferrana! Let's have some action for once. Less words and more deeds! I'll see the C.O. about it to-day.'

I did. 'Sir, I wish to exchange the camel at Mek,' I announced.

'What for?'

'Another camel.'

'I mean *why* do you want to exchange it?' said the C.O. patiently.

'Well, I think it needs a rest.'

'What does it do at Mek? A lot of work?'

'None, as far as I can find out, sir.'

'Then it oughtn't to need a rest. Is it ill?'

'Well, not exactly *ill*,' I answered carefully.

'How long's it been there?'

'I don't know, I'm afraid.'

'Is it old?'

'Not very—at least I'm not sure that it isn't, actually. I mean—that is I rather imagine—'

'How would you propose to effect this exchange?'

'Well, by boat, I suppose, sir. At least I can't think of any other—'

'Look,' said the C.O., exerting considerable self-control, 'I don't know what you and Ferrana do all day in that office of yours, but I *work* in mine! If you come pestering me again for a boat to collect the Mek camel—of which you appear to know absolutely nothing—I'll—well, I'll send you to Mek yourself! And that goes for Ferrana, too!'

I hurriedly stopped worrying about the camel and hid its file at the very bottom of the 'Pending' tray. But I was determined that it should at any rate be fed regularly, and I took care to see that the little steamer which made the fortnightly trip down the coast took the requisite number of sacks and bales all labelled 'MEK' in large letters. The camel at Mek might be a long way away, and I would probably never see it—unless, of course, I inadvertently brought up its name in the C.O.'s office again—but I would give it all the attention I gave to its thirty-two fellows in the Divisional compound. And doubtless a grateful and well-fed camel would think kindly of its master so far away yet so diligent in its care.

IN due course, I was sent down the coast to relieve Connor. I handed over to a new man, took a rather thankful farewell of Ferrana, and boarded the little steamer.

Three days later I was taking over my new Division.

'Well, that's about all, I think,' said Connor with a sigh of relief as we started to sign the lists of arms, stores, and equipment.

I pounced. 'It isn't, you know,' I told him with relish.

'No?'

'No. What about the camel at Mek?'

'Oh, of course! I forgot that.' Connor grinned. 'Thanks for reminding me, old boy.'

I didn't quite like that grin. 'I say—I suppose it's all right, isn't it?'

'All right?'

'Well—I mean it hasn't escaped or anything?'

'No, of course not. Whatever made you think that?'

'Oh, nothing. Nothing at all. I—well, I just wanted to be certain it was still there.'

'Since you've become so regular in remitting its rations it certainly hasn't died of hunger,' returned Connor pleasantly.

'Good. Still, you know, I can't help feeling sorry for that camel; it must get so bored. How did it look when you last saw it?'

'I never have.'

'Not seen it?'

'No. You see I've never been to Mek. Never had any reason to go. I use it as a punishment station, actually. Send the constables there when they've been idle or insolent. They hate it for there's nothing there except sand—and the camel, of course. Corporal Niccolini—he's my driver and general factotum—can tell you all about it. He delivers the rations there twice a month.'

Connor sailed away next day towards Headquarters and comparative civilisation.

A WEEK later Niccolini, a stocky cheerful Milanese who had been several years in the Division, announced that next day he would be taking the big truck and going to Mek.

'I'll come with you,' I said.

'What for, Tenente? It's a very uncomfortable journey and takes nearly twenty-four hours. Nobody ever goes to Mek for pleasure.'

'I'm not going there for pleasure,' I replied testily. 'I'm going to see this camel I've heard so much about.'

'It's a hell of a way to go to see one camel,' said Niccolini, shrugging his shoulders indifferently. 'Anyway, it'll probably be out on patrol,' he added.

'I'll risk that.'

'O.K. then. Only, you're wasting your time.' He grinned and wandered off, his hands in his pockets, to see to the truck.

I mentally composed a strongly-worded notice for the Divisional board on 'Discipline—European Other Ranks.'

Niccolini was quite right. It was a highly uncomfortable journey—hours of jolting in the intense heat over the barest remnants of a desert track. But at last, dirty, sore and

stiff in every joint, we rattled into Mek under a blazing noonday sun. It was an unrewarding sort of place—three decaying straw-huts and a bony goat tied with string to a stunted thorn-bush. 'Mek!' announced Niccolini disgustedly, and brought the truck to a jarring halt. A couple of half-naked native constables, who had been sleepily washing clothes in a tin basin full of filthy water, came unenthusiastically to attention. I could see no sign of a camel.

I inquired about the animal, after a meal in one of the huts, and found that it was out on patrol, as Niccolini had foretold. All I could be shown was some of its spare harness and its tethering-post, around which was some fairly fresh camel-dung. It couldn't have been gone long. Had it, I wondered, been taken away purposely because of my visit—and, if so, why? But I dismissed the idea almost at once, for no one had known I was accompanying Niccolini. Annoyed and disappointed, for I had a strange longing to see this animal, I put all the constables on charge for having dirty rifles, being improperly dressed, and leaving their quarters in a disgusting and unpolicemanlike condition. I tried the case at once, found them guilty on all counts, and sentenced them to a further two months' duty at Mek.

WE left again that evening, and after a run of nearly thirty miles camped for the night by the shore. After supper, which Niccolini cooked with considerable skill, we lay on the warm sand under a full moon and listened to the land-crabs scurrying about down by the water's edge. I remembered that I'd left my tobacco-pouch somewhere in the back of the truck and went off to look for it. There seemed to be quantities of stuff in the rear of the lorry and as I rummaged about I wondered idly, and rather irritably, what it was. Lifting the edge of a sun-scorched tarpaulin, I saw a bale of hay. Close by was another—and next to that a sack of maize. The camel's rations—and we were taking them back! Then what . . . ? Light slowly dawned. The vague suspicion that had haunted the back of my mind ever since Connor left hardened into dreadful certainty. I walked slowly over to Niccolini.

He looked up as I came, grinning until his white teeth glittered in the sharp moonlight. 'Found it, Tenente?'

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'Niccolini,' I said deliberately, 'there is no camel at Mek.'

'Isn't there?'

'You know very well there isn't! Come on, admit it!'

'All right, Tenente. There isn't a camel. I'll explain.'

'You'd better,' I said grimly, and sat down beside him.

'Well, it's like this. Once, a long time ago, there was a Commandant of your old Division who lost one of his camels when he was due to hand over and come down to us here just as you've done. I don't know how he lost it—perhaps it was stolen, or perhaps it escaped—anyway, it would have meant a court of inquiry and he might have lost his promotion. So he told the new Commandant who was taking over that he'd sent the camel to Mek on a dhow. The new Commandant was quite satisfied, and signed for thirty-three camels on the condition that the Mek animal was signed for in both Divisions. Well, that was quite simple, for when the officer who'd lost it came down here he signed for it again. And when he left he handed it over again!' Niccolini shook his head admiringly. 'So ever since then there's been a camel at Mek—officially speaking. Very few Commandants ever go to Mek, and, when they do, the camel's out on patrol. So they never know. Most of them, however, have suspected. Tenente Connor suspected very strongly—I think that is why he was particularly careful never to go to Mek. He nearly forgot the camel at the handing-over, though. He told me that—only you reminded him.'

'I did,' I said bitterly. 'And he was very grateful—but carry on.'

'There isn't any more really. The hay and maize go to our police mules—it helps to supplement their own rations.'

'What about the camel-dung?'

'Mule - dung,' corrected Niccolini complacently. 'I brought it in a sack. You see it's best if the Commandant doesn't actually

know there isn't a camel—otherwise he might get worried. I'm afraid you'll get worried now, Tenente,' he said, shaking his head regretfully.

'Not for long, I won't! Just as soon as I get back I'll—well, I'll take steps.'

Niccolini shrugged and grinned. 'It's up to you now—it's your camel. You've signed for it twice, handed it over once, and sent rations to it for six months. Of course, if you like to say that it's never existed—'

'That's not my fault.'

'Maybe not, Tenente, but who's going to know it? And anyway it's your camel now.'

'For goodness' sake stop saying it's my camel! You'll make me think the damn thing really exists in a minute!'

'That,' said Niccolini gently, 'would be quite the best thing you could do.'

A WEEK later Niccolini came into the office, saluted, and put two bottles down on my desk. 'The boat's in, Tenente. Here's your whisky.'

'Thank you—that's all,' I said coldly.

But he didn't go. 'One more thing, Tenente. No rations have come for the camel. Do you think you could, perhaps, write a letter to your successor at Headquarters and remind him about them?'

I gave him a withering stare, but it had no effect. He looked back calmly, but in the depths of his dark Italian eyes laughter flickered. There was a long silence. Still I knew—had known ever since that night—that there was nothing I could do. 'Very well—I'll see to it.'

'Thank you very much, Tenente. It's bad for the camel to go hungry—or my mules for that matter.'

'Get to hell out of here, Niccolini!'

He went. Sighing, I pulled a draft letter-pad towards me. 'Rations—Police Animals,' I wrote. 'I am informed that no rations have arrived for the camel at Mek . . .'

Gossamer

*The silken thread a spider spins
Glistens in the sun;
Or is it airy nylon
Some gentle fairy spun?*

*Ah! sure, I know there's no surmise,
It gleams against the sky—
The shining web, securely moored,
To trap the hapless fly.*

JAMES MACALPINE.

New World

Girl Meets Boy—in the Magazines

HENRY LEROY

I HAVE discovered a new world—a more amusing make-believe set-up than musical comedies on the stage, westerns on the films—a world in which the only realities are the emotions of the human heart, female variety.

You've guessed it. The people of this strange land live in the pages of those brightly-coloured journals which girl-friends read on trains and wives leave lying about on settees.

FOR my own profit—I hope—I have recently been studying the laws of behaviour which prevail in this new world. Despite the complete dominance of the fair sex, I've come to the conclusion that it's not such a bad place for a man. It would suit the romantic type, anyway.

For one thing, resistance to love-making is almost an unheard-of rudeness. This I applaud, but few women of my acquaintance practise what they read.

Another very convenient arrangement is the neat classification of all the female section of the population between the ages of seventeen and thirty. The others do not need classification. Younger than seventeen, they are all precocious, tomboy sisters; older than thirty, they are all fussy mothers whose daughters are more important.

Among those in the vital thirteen years age-group, however, there is more variety. As you might expect, they are all either married or single. That's the first division, which doesn't exist among the sisters and mothers.

All those who are single share one sentiment—they want to get married as soon as possible. The career-girl, who has no time for men, is completely unknown. And no

right-thinking man can disagree with that state of affairs.

After that, things get a little more subtle. The poor masculine brain, which has never been able to appreciate the finer shades of sentiment, is hard put to it to grasp the significance of the nice distinctions of character among the unhappy spinsters. As I see it, however, there are seven main types: the thwarted home-girl whose sister marries the man she secretly loves but who promptly falls for the best man at the wedding; the disillusioned shorthand-typist who finds that the handsome young manager she so admires has a wife and two children; the warm-hearted woman who loves her man so unconditionally that he feels revulsion at her lack of pride and who has to cool off to win him back; the witty society woman who tries too sophisticated an approach on a modest, retiring young artist and has to be put right by an old school-friend, just happily married herself; the resourceful girl who gets her man by telling him a few quite justified white lies about all the other non-existent men interested in her; the angry ballet-dancer who discovers that her boy-friend will not propose to her because he believes she would rather continue her career than get married—ignorant fellow; the kindly, sympathetic girl who can't resist the helpless man so badly in need of 'mothering.'

HAVING achieved the longed-for state of wedded bliss, many of the young wives find themselves little happier than they were as uneasy spinsters living on the very edge of the awful shelf. They all go through the same trials. Nothing is as their husbands had said it would be. The house is too small,

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too far from the town. The children are, they have to admit, rather a nuisance at times. And, above all, their husbands get too engrossed in their work, pay insufficient attention to them, and completely fail to understand their point of view.

Then something happens to make them realise how lucky they are to have husbands and children at all. They forgive the husbands, who were never worried anyway, and there is peace and reconciliation round the hearth. Not a hint of unfaithfulness by either party. It is altogether too sordid a thing to be permitted in a world conceived and ordered by women.

THE men in this fantastic, feminine land are the most charming, captivating, dim-witted creatures imaginable. They are the pawns in the game of life and love played by the omnipotent, invariably beautiful women who control their destinies. They enjoy moving about the chessboard without making any exertion of their own. What a delightful life! All the thinking and worrying done by a crowd of lovely women. All the responsibilities theirs. And all of them anxious to get married. Surely it is the perfect set-up—for men.

The men are all handsome, too, in this new world. Some are tall and some are short—but, tall or short, dark or fair, blue eyes or brown eyes, one and all are essentially attractive. Each man has an irresistible attraction for the right girl—and she always finds him. It is hard to imagine a more enchanting fiction.

AS you will have gathered by now, everything revolves round marriage, and it is not really surprising to observe that all the people who live in this strange land of half-truths are only there to assist in the vast business of keeping the number of weddings at a respectable level or to prevent unions already solemnised from breaking up. The subordination of film-stars and members of parliament to the position of mere agents in

a matrimonial manoeuvre shows an enviable single-mindedness among the planners of this delightful way of life.

On a different plane—inside the family itself—there is the same tendency. A mother is only useful in so far as she stops her daughter from sending the engagement-ring back to her fiancé a week before the wedding by telling her how she had the same impulse herself before her marriage, but overcame it, and 'Look how happy I have been these twenty-five years!' The father is a member of the golf club only so that he can be friendly with the employer of his daughter's fiancé and somehow induce him to give the boy a rise—and then, of course, the couple can get married six months earlier than they expected. And so on. One would think the variations would be endless, but, in the new world, as in the old, it is surprising how often history repeats itself.

The instruments which Cupid uses to perfect his designs are not confined to single human beings. A dog may have a touch of distemper so that a woman vet can visit it and discover that its owner is the only man in the world for her. One country may declare war on another so that a beautiful Red Cross nurse can find the man she was meant for in a military hospital. A girl's car may break down near a lonely house so that she can meet an unhappy bachelor who needs her love and sympathy. A dance orchestra may play a certain waltz so that a wife, hearing it and remembering her husband's declaration of love for her to the accompaniment of the same tune, can decide not to leave him after all.

'Girl meets boy' (and keeps him) in many ways—although there is a basic similarity sometimes which cannot escape notice. 'Girl meets boy.' Always that way round—never the other. Like the Mounties, she always gets her man. The hunted (or apparently so) has become unashamedly the hunter. And all this created for the entertainment of women. Therein lies the humour, mystery, and paradox of this new feminine world. Women are the most undignified creatures in it.

The Postmark on a Letter

R. K. FORSTER

POSTMARKS are peculiar things. They have convicted criminals and they have broken marriages; they have caused misunderstandings, and prevented them. They have been collected by peers and forged by swindlers. They have featured in lawsuits and in radio plays, and have proved and disproved the value of philatelic treasures. They have, on various occasions, been commended and condemned, and they have, with impersonal candour, caused happiness and heartache, laughter and tears.

In spite of all this, postmarks remain one of the commonest commonplaces in our everyday lives and, as such, they have been taken for granted by every generation familiar with them since Colonel Henry Bishop, Postmaster-General in the reign of Charles II, introduced them to England in 1661. Wrote Bishop, defending his administration against charges of postal delays: 'A Stamp is invented, that is putt upon every letter shewing the day of the moneth that every letter comes to the Office, so that no Letter Carryer may dare detain a letter from post to post, which before was usual.' With this announcement, and in the crude form of imperfect half-inch circles divided by a horizontal line enclosing letters to denote the day and the month, the postal date-stamp made its debut. Thereafter, the postmark progressed through the various stages of its development towards the form familiar to-day, until, with the introduction of adhesive stamps in May 1840, the important new function of postage-stamp cancellation became its primary duty.

STRANGELY enough, it is only in recent years that postmarks have to any extent attracted the attention of collectors. As far back as the late 1860's certain enthusiasts, the earliest of them a Mr Thomas Gosse of

Bath, derived pleasure from their interest in the subject, but not until 1883 did the idea of forming a club take shape. In that year a group of collectors, about twenty in number, succeeded in uniting in what was to become known as the Postmark Club. The Club, now thriving in its sixty-seventh year of existence, has numbered in its membership-roll men and women in many varied walks of life, including architects, lawyers, housewives, doctors, baronets, schoolboys, and ministers of religion.

To-day some tens of thousands of people here and abroad are keen postmark-collectors. To meet this large and growing interest in the subject specialist societies, such as the Cosmo Club, the Travelling Post Office and Seapost Society, and the American Maritime Postmark Society, have been formed with members in over twenty-five countries.

As recently as 1936 the holding of a public auction of postmarks was news. Under the headline 'First Auction of Postal Marks' the *Sunday Times* of 11th October of that year reported that 'thirty philatelists, three of them women, spent yesterday afternoon in a London saleroom bidding at the first auction ever held of rare postal marks.' At this auction, bundles of covers were sold at prices which worked out at about a shilling each. Nine years later, at one of their sales, now held at frequent intervals, a London firm of philatelic auctioneers disposed of a collection of postmarks and material of postal-history interest for a sum in the region of £10,000. For one item alone, a 'wreck' cover of 1875, sent from London to the United States, a price of £17 was realised. For a single postmarked envelope of 1876, dispatched from the United States Consulate in Callao to an address in Georgia, the sum of £30 was paid. A collection, in thirty volumes, of English and 'used abroad' cancellations and ad-

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hesives numbering some thousands of patiently acquired items found a purchaser at £235. From such figures it is possible to trace the rapid trend of interest in a hobby which was once no more than philately's Cinderella sister.

At one time the postal imprint of the House of Commons branch post-office upon a Victorian adhesive would have left the collecting fraternity unmoved. To-day, such an item would be worth thirty shillings. More surprising still are the catalogue prices of material surviving from the 17th century. Bishop postmarks of 1661 carry a nominal price of £10 each, and frequently fetch considerably more. An early postal slogan, 'The Post for All Kent Goes Every Evening from the Round House in Love Lane & Comes Every Morning,' is catalogued at £50, and the curious opera-glass-shaped cancellation introduced by Mr Pearson Hill in 1857 is listed at £65 for specimens on a cover and in good condition. On all levels this incline towards re-valuation of the worth of the humble postmark is apparent, with prices tending to increase yearly, in ratio to the rarity and special desirability of the items.

THE reasons for the postmark's astonishing popularity are not far to seek. There is much more behind the date-stamp on a letter than the fact that it might have been imprinted either with the hurried impartiality of a 900-letters-a-minute stamp-cancelling machine or with the careful precision of the postmistress at the grocery post-office at the end of the village.

First, there are the historical associations of older specimens that signpost the way back through years that have long ago slipped away into old, forgotten silences. 'Intreat Mr Dronning to convey this saifly by the post'; 'For John Rushwort, Esqr. at a groicer's shop nexte White Beare in Old Southampton Buildings, Over against Graise Inn Gate'—these and their like are postal superscriptions that have survived the hurts and confusions of centuries on letters conveyed by royal messengers 'ridynge in all dylligent hast.'

Then come the surprising oddities of relatively recent years. Among these the 'kicking mule' cancellation, devised in the 1880's by an eccentric character named Klinkner, is probably the best known. Klinkner, a native

of Oakland, California, manufactured metal signs, rubber-stamps, and similar devices, and was eventually persuaded to make cancellers for the postmasters of certain American postal centres. His postmark took the form of a mule with ears and tail and hind-legs raised, and as the 'kicking mule' cancellation it took the fancy of collectors as long ago as 1886 and has since been sought after by postmark enthusiasts in all parts of the world.

The attractions of other groups of postmarks lie in the places from which they derive, in the events which they commemorate, and, occasionally, in errors connected with their use.

The scope in the first group is practically unlimited. Postmarks have been issued from ships, hotels, palaces, airports, schools, exhibitions, trains, and prisons. There was once a postmark of the King's yacht ('Royal Yacht'), as there was for Scott's tragic expedition to the South Pole. 'Posted on Bridge During Opening Celebrations' was the inscription on letters posted on Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932, and 'Sea Floor, Bahamas' was the imprint of the world's first and only underseas post-office, opened in the Williamson Photosphere on the sea-floor off the Bahamas in 1939. Shephard's Hotel in Cairo and the Reformatory School at Hazaribagh in India share the distinction of a postal imprint. So, also, do Niagara Falls and Table Mountain. Indian postmarks include Madura Palace and Multan Jail, and range from the date-stamp of Lahore Racecourse to that of the Perfect Pottery Works, Jubbulpore.

Peculiar placenames themselves provide an extravagant fantasy of strange postmarks. There are date-stamps of Wait-a-While, of Sleepy Eye, and of Bridal Veil. One wonders who christened Mumps. What is so wildly funny about Ha Ha? What happened at Accident, and how do places get names like Santaclaus, Teaticket, Bad Heart, and Worry? The world's half-million post-offices are prepared to offer examples equally intriguing from cities and seaports and tucked-away hamlets in every distant corner. Home Rule is in New South Wales, Garden of Eden in Nova Scotia. Praise, Hazard, Paintlick, Barefoot, Mummie, Morningview, and Beauty are a group of postmarks from Kentucky, and High and Low, Hell and Paradise, Barking, Yelling, Clatter, Bangs, and Knock are a few specimens from other parts of the world.

THE POSTMARK ON A LETTER

YET another class of unusual postmarks with attractive possibilities for the collector are the imprints deriving from exhibitions, jubilee celebrations, conferences, and similar important occasions. For many years national and international events of this type have been postally honoured with commemorative date-stamps covering a variety of activities ranging from naval conferences to dog shows.

In England the pioneer of special exhibition postmarks was the specimen introduced for use at the Great Exhibition of 1851. In 1862 a second great exhibition was held in South Kensington and for this also a special commemorative date-stamp was brought into use. Thereafter, in slightly less than thirty years, at least nine major exhibitions were held in places as widely separated as Paris, Vienna, Philadelphia, and Melbourne.

From this time forward, exhibition and conference postmarks appeared to be granted formal status as a postal feature of any great forgoing. The American Exhibition of 1887, the Penny Postage Jubilee of 1890, and the Royal Naval Exhibition of 1891 were all productive of special postal imprints, and in later years Chelsea Flower Show, Birmingham Dog Show, the Olympic Games, and such diverse occasions as sanitary congresses, cricket matches, race-meetings, and Esperanto conferences have been granted certain postal facilities and distinctive cancellation marks.

Freak postmarks make a final group in which collectors evince a particularly lively interest. For a start, the misspelling of place-names occurs more frequently than might be

expected. Date-stamp specimens of 'St Noets,' Huntingdonshire, have a prideful place in more than one enthusiast's albums, and, some years ago, Paignton, Devon, caused joy among collectors, and consternation among postal officials, by appearing as 'Paington' in date-stamp form. Singapore, similarly ill-treated, was postally rechristened 'Snigapore,' and Braes-River, a Jamaican place-mark, mysteriously took the form 'Braze-River.'

Accidents of one sort or another have produced most of these classics, and they are usually quickly rectified. Occasionally, however, one mistake can lead to another. Such was the case with a date-stamp impression imprinted in 1918 on letters passing through Helhoughton, a village in West Norfolk, south-west of Fakenham. In June of that year postal packets franked 'Elhoughton' began to appear, and from specimens in the possession of collectors it is evident that the error escaped unnoticed for some considerable time. By October 1918, however, the mystery of the missing 'H' had clearly been solved in official quarters and the letter was reinstated in its rightful place.

The world seemed all right again. Ferdinand of Bulgaria had abdicated; Anglo-Italian forces had crossed the Piave; Ostend had been occupied, Douai captured—and Helhoughton's date-stamp had been reprieved in the end from the indignity of decapitation! In Helhoughton the rejoicing was short-lived. Date-stamp impressions bearing the date 'October, 1918' and the spelling 'Helhaughton' are still treasured by collectors!

Christmas-Tree

*Has all your green promise come to this?
Poor Christmas-tree!
Not for you the wild hillside;
not tall with tall companions
will you stretch,
shouldering the keen wind,
whispering through the dark night.
Not for you a grave and stately age.
Here's your young years' untimely end,
here in this narrow tub,
your fading green with candles trimmed,
with meretricious finery
a-tinkle and a-glitter.*

E. J. K.

The Dancer and the Duke

CHARLES

JANET was a Hakka, and that alone made her an unusual figure on the floor of the 'Exclusive Dancing Academy' (boasting, as it did, the prettiest partners in Hong Kong), since the Hakkas' pride of clan is so profound as to prevent their womenfolk from competing in the cabaret world.

The Hakkas are a strange race (the word itself means 'stranger'), of whose origin little is known. They came from the north a few centuries back, fought their way inland and established their settlements all over the coastal area of Kwangtung. They are intelligent, vivacious, courageous, honest, lawless, violent-tempered, and insanely proud. Usually farmers, they are sometimes soldiers and often bandits, but never petty thieves. A fair proportion have achieved prosperity and some measure of education, but there are few to be found at the top of the tree, perhaps because their innate honesty is an insuperable handicap.

Their peculiarities are many. Janet once told me that they had no midwives, as all mothers taught their daughters how to deliver their own babies; and throughout the centuries of Manchu servitude, Hakka women were spared the agonies of bound feet. I believed that I could recognise Hakkas by physical differences. The women were prettier and more vital—'If you held your fist to their nose it would spark,' said one observer. The men were taller and more Mongolian than the average Chinese, while they have a peculiar and quite distinctive tittering laugh, swelling on very rare occasions to a full-throated, belly-shaking shout.

OF racial pride Janet had her full share, but in her case it took the form of gentle dignity, perfect manners, and complete self-possession. She moved slowly and smiled

slowly. She spoke little, but with a command of our idiom very rare in her circle. I never saw her look bored or offended. If she disliked a party she vanished; if she disliked a partner (and her standards were high), the partner was well advised to forget her.

She was at her best presiding at table in her own flat or at a 'da-bin-lo' party. Da-bin-lo is full of pitfalls for the foreigner. A brazier of live coals stands in the middle of the table and keeps a great pot of thin broth just on the boil. All round it there are little plates of oysters, fish's maw, shark's lips, liver, ducks' tongues, ducks' hearts, onions, and what Janet described, quite accurately, as intestine. You pick up titbits on your chopsticks, hold them in the broth until parboiled, and then pop them into your mouth piping hot. It tastes good, but it is hard work, and you presently develop a tired and aching wrist. Then Janet would notice your distress, select for you the choicest morsels, cook them with her own chopsticks, and lay them in your bowl, murmuring with gentle gusto: 'My food is poor, but pray eat well of it.'

She knew instinctively when to speak of, or to address, a man as 'Mr So-and-so' and when Christian names became permissible—a convention which some English women never seem to learn. But how she knew, I never discovered, since she met English folk seldom or never, while her reading in our language was confined to that immortal work *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

However, the primitive Hakka peasant was not too far under the surface, and at any rate on one occasion she appeared in court on a charge of assault. Three of her Portuguese colleagues had apparently been 'picking on' her for some time, and one Saturday night, when tempers are always short after the long hours of dancing with whoever pays for a

THE DANCER AND THE DUKE

dance, they passed her going home along the Bund and addressed her as 'moon-face.' The evidence as to subsequent events was both confused and contradictory, but what is certain is that, when the police arrived, a rickshaw had one wheel off and one shaft broken, two Portuguese girls were splashing helplessly in the water, and Janet, standing on the brink, was brandishing a slipper and advising them to swim back to Macao.

'Moon-face' was indeed a deadly insult, since it described only too well Janet's large round visage, with its high forehead, smoothed-out features, and wide mouth. Beauty, except of expression, she had not, but this was more than compensated for by her long, slender, shapely hands and feet, her magnificent figure and graceful movements. 'Cat-like' is a hackneyed and much-misused adjective, but nothing else suited her so well, and to this day her memory conjures up a large, indolent, indifferent, but thoroughly alert, tabby-cat.

JANET came from a large village, a little way inland from pirate-haunted Bias Bay and one of the few places whose inhabitants put up a serious fight when the Japanese landed to march on Canton. Her family owned an orange-grove and, until the invasion, were people of some substance. Her mother was the typical Chinese matriarch; her brother the typical semi-educated Chinese youth of to-day, shiftless, helpless, unsatisfactory, and invertebrate.

Her father must have been of unconventional mind, since he habitually discussed with his child the family plans and family fortunes, an unheard-of proceeding in China as between father and daughter. From him she inherited her hatred of gas, or perhaps, as she maintained, the 'gas-spirit's' enmity to herself. Domestic gas was the one element that instantly reduced Janet to a petulant, perverse, and stubborn little girl. Whether it was a bathroom geyser, a cooking-range, or the humble gas-ring, the procedure was always the same—much muttering, the striking of a match, the prolonged hiss of escaping vapour, a shattering explosion, a volley of Hakka swear-words, and an indignant appeal for help.

But from her father, she took, too, more dangerous traits—those black moods of depression that haunt the Hakka soul, and that indifference to death (so strange among a people who love life so whole-heartedly) that

leads all too frequently to self-destruction, not, as with the Japanese, in the form of a high-flown, theatrical gesture, but simply as the removal of oneself from a situation that has become intolerable.

From her father she had heard, and in turn told me, how the Hakkas had refused to bind the feet of their children—and why. Foot-binding is not an 'ancient Chinese custom.' It was in fact brought in by the Manchus when they overran the country about three centuries ago and was simply imposed by them on the women of a conquered race. In the first few weeks of a girl baby's life her feet were tightly bound with the four smaller toes twisted underneath the sole and the arch crumpled so that the base of the big toe touched the heel. Two shoes stand on my desk as I write. One measures $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the other $4\frac{1}{2}$. The pain must have been appalling, and an old proverb says: 'Every flower-foot is paid for by a jarful of baby's tears.' The effect was to deprive the women of the use of their ankles, so that they walked, or rather tottered, from the hip and knee. Old style apologists would say that this gait was aesthetically beautiful and compare it to the swaying of bamboo clumps in the wind; new style treaty-port Chinese would look arch and knowing, and hint that by this means only could gadding about be prevented. The real reason was purely voluptuous, and the acceptance of shocking suffering inflicted on helpless infants for the physical pleasure of the future husband is, to us, infinitely repugnant.

JANET seldom spoke of such subjects. Usually our talk was of Western manners and, incongruously enough, we sometimes argued questions of conduct and points of honour. One evening we were joined by a German officer in the service of China, a Junker of the old school who was bursting with paternal pride because his five-year-old daughter, having been naughty, had refused to apologise after an hour locked in a dark cupboard. I found the story distasteful and told Janet, instead, a tale which the great Duke of Wellington loved, in his old age, to tell of himself.

It was during a battle in the Peninsular War that a Portuguese general refused to allow his troops to move to the attack and said that he would do so only if the Duke went on his knees to beg him. In those days commanders

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galloped over the field of battle with their whole staff following them, and one can picture the scene—the two groups of gorgeously-uniformed horsemen and, between them, the lean, hatchet-faced, hawk-nosed Wellington, sitting a little stiffly after long hours in the saddle, with the plump, pompous little Portuguese confronting him. The Duke always finished his story with the same words: 'Well, I had to have his men, and I didn't give a damn about the other thing. So off my horse I got and down I flopped.'

Janet was silent for a long time. Then she said: 'I do not like your legend. It gives me black thoughts. But your Duke must have been a superior type.'

The Sino-Japanese War at first made little difference to Janet's life. There were several Japanese among her regular dancing-partners and their future treatment was discussed at a solemn meeting of the leaders of the cabaret world, when it was decided that the dispute was between the Chinese and Japanese governments, and that there was no reason why it should affect personal relationships. This attitude did not long survive the massacres of Shanghai and Nanking, and Janet and her friends soon came to realise what a Japanese victory would mean to them.

The occupation of coastal Kwangtung placed the burden of supporting her family squarely on Janet's capable shoulders and, from having worried little about money, she began to bank her very considerable earnings. Her love of giving presents remained, and I still cherish her jade cuff-links, while my family still wear on occasions the woolly pull-over she sent on hearing that the climate of Canada could be cold. She also continued to pay formal visits to her friends in hospital, much to the wonderment of the English nurses. During the debacle of Dunkirk and the fall of France her tact and sympathy, like that of all my Chinese friends, was touching, especially when one could not help but remember one's own outspokenness on China's troubles of the previous years.

THE short and disastrous siege of Hong Kong is a sad story unwillingly recalled. Janet's colourful, carefree world crumbled overnight and, like all Chinese in adversity, she prepared to return to her ancestral village. But among her friends were a little group of fanatics, who, up to the last days of the

defence, had continued their private war against collaborators within the fortress, and whose lives, unless they escaped at once, were not worth an hour's purchase. Essentially townsmen, they would have been spotted in any party of peasants by the stupidest Japanese patrol, and in a country where 'each man carries his passport in his mouth' their chances of survival were non-existent.

Janet herself, pure peasant that she was, had simply to discard her tight-fitting, high-necked slip of flowered silk, don the garb of a coolie-woman, and walk over the frontier. But Janet collected the desperate little band, stripped them of their zoot-suits, rough-cropped their hair, rubbed handfuls of good brown earth into their pallid sensitive skins, taught them to shoulder the heavy bamboo porter's pole and to balance their burdens, and led them out, or rather, as the only woman, walked at the tail of the procession, towards the unavoidable Japanese control-post.

The four men got past, and then—very likely it was just Janet's unusual height that irritated the little kempeitai corporal—she received two resounding slaps in the face, and was ordered to stop and bow. One of her friends told me: 'Janet stooped and put down her loads very carefully. Then she straightened up—she must have been a foot taller than the little brute—and I saw her fingers working, and I wondered if it would be his tommy-gun or those horrible huge two-handed samurai swords. And then the impossible happened. Janet bowed, a real abject down-to-the-ground bow. The Jap slapped her when she stood up, and she bowed again. She bowed three times, and each time he slapped her. Then she picked up her load, and we went on. We were safe.'

'Nobody cared to speak to Janet all that day. Our feet were sore, and our shoulders were sore. We had our own troubles, but we all thought about her. When we ate our rice, she still said nothing, and so we lay down to sleep. Then I heard an odd noise from Janet's pallet. It sounded as if she were crying, and that made me unhappy, because Hakka women never cry, at least not from pain, or shame, or sorrow—sometimes from sheer temper, yes. I got up and went over to her, and she was not crying, she was laughing. She laughed more and more. She got up and staggered about still laughing. You know how a Hakka laughs when she does laugh properly. Her mouth opens till

her face seems to disappear behind it and her whole body shakes. But when she got her breath, all she said was some nonsense in English. It sounded like: "So down I flopped." Well, I was desperately tired and cross, and I'd been horribly frightened that morning, and my feet hurt. So I just lay down again

and left her with her joke, whatever it was.'

For myself, I like to imagine that at that moment a lean, arrogant, eagle-nosed old gentleman looked out from his niche in Valhalla and, across the barriers of colour, caste, and creed, recognised his kindred and joined in the jest.

Inheritance of Eye-Colour

H. J. CAMPBELL

PROSPECTIVE parents often wonder what colour their children's eyes will be. We can rarely be sure about this, but a little knowledge of genetics enables us to secure rough prophecies.

Initially, we must understand what eye-colour really is, because most people have erroneous ideas about it. Many parents believe, for example, that their bonny blue-eyed baby has blue pigment in his iris. But this is not true. Blue eyes are an optical illusion! The iris is made up of two flat discs, pressed against each other. Blue eyes occur when a small amount of dark pigment is deposited in the rear disc. Light rays reflected from the pigment granules give an appearance of blueness—just as the sky appears blue due to the reflection of sunlight on dust particles.

Every other kind of eye, except albino, has this blue ground, so to speak. Green eyes occur when the baby has an additional deposit of yellow pigment in the front disc of the iris. The two colours merge and appear green. Brown eyes are caused by a fairly closely packed layer of dark pigment granules in front of the iris, masking the blue behind. Black eyes result from an intense deposit of dark granules. Sometimes there is a very slight deposition of black pigment in the front part of the iris, and the effect of this, combined with the blue at the rear, is to give

grey eyes. Lastly, albino eyes have no pigment at all; their pink appearance is due to the iris blood-vessels. Since albino eyes are pathological, we will not deal with them here.

Knowing what eye-colour is, we are now in a position to consider the principles of inheritance. Here we have to understand a little about genes, which are difficult to describe accurately. Let us ignore the latest scientific research, which has made genes seem complicated, and bear in mind that we are interested in eye-colour inheritance, not genetics as such.

From this point of view we can look upon genes as particles, particles that are present in very large numbers in every cell in our body. If we say that, apart from accidents and changes in the environment, our appearance and our actions are controlled by genes, we have gene-action in a nutshell. The length and colour of our hair, our height, the size of our ears, and a host of other visible characters are determined by the genes in our cells. So, too, is the deposition of pigment in our eyes.

AT the moment of conception a baby receives, among a lot of other genes, two genes for eye-colour—one from each parent. The baby's eye-colour will depend entirely on those two genes, so it is with

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these genes that we are concerned when considering eye-colour inheritance.

Now, obviously the baby may receive either two genes of the same colour, or two genes for different colours. If it receives a pair of the same colour, then its eyes will be of that colour. But if it receives genes for different colours, its eyes will assume the darker of the two—which brings us to the principle of dominance. This is that darker colours are dominant over lighter colours, and the principle applies to hair and skin as well as to eyes. By dominant we mean that it produces its effect even if a lighter gene is present; it masks the lighter one.

Thus, if a baby receives a black gene from one parent, its eyes will be black whatever the nature of the other gene or the other parent. In a similar manner, a brown gene is dominant over grey, green, and blue genes; grey and green (equal dominance) are dominant to blue. With a pair of unequal genes, the one that is not dominant is called recessive. So we see that blue genes are recessive to all other colours. In other words, before a child can have blue eyes it must receive two blue genes from its parents.

That does not mean that its parents must both have blue eyes. The fact that the genes passed on to offspring may have no apparent relation to the parents' eyes complicates the picture. Each parent has two eye-colour genes in his or her body-cells—the ones acquired from his or her parents. But at the reproductive phase only one of this pair can be given to the baby. Which one is sheer chance; both are available.

We can see, then, that a parent may have, say, a black and a blue gene in his body-cells, but his eyes will be black because that colour is dominant over blue. Now, this kind of parent offers the baby a choice between black and blue. If both parents are of this type,

then it is possible that the two blue genes will be selected, and the baby will have blue eyes even though both its parents have black. On the other hand, if both parents have blue eyes, then they cannot be carrying any dark genes, and the baby has only four blue genes from which to choose. Its eyes will always, barring accidents, be blue.

We can, therefore, say that children will have dark eyes when their parents each have two dark genes. Dark eyes will also appear when one parent has two dark genes while the other has one dark and one light, or two light. If both parents carry one dark and one light gene, their children have a one in four chance of being light-eyed. When each parent has two light genes, all their children will have light eyes.

IT should be obvious by now that the colour of parents' eyes is not an exact indication of what colour will appear in the baby. It is the parental genes that count. However, the following general rules help us to determine which eye-colour genes we possess, and so to work out which ones we *might* pass on: if our own eyes and those of all our familial relatives are black or brown, then it is almost certain that we have two dark genes. If even only one relative has lighter eyes, then we may be carrying one dark and one light gene. This is always so when one of our parents had light eyes. If our eyes are grey or green, we have no dark genes. Again, if our eyes are blue, we must be carrying two blue genes, irrespective of our parents' eye-colour.

Nevertheless, we must remember that there are exceptions to all general rules. There are several factors—age and disease are two—that can override gene action and throw out our calculation. At most we can say that a certain colour is a high probability.

A Harmless Rival

(Leontius, 6th century A.D.—Greek Anthology V, 295)

*Touch, as she sips,
Those honeyed lips?
Ah, happy cup! For—though
No grudge I bear—
You venture where
My lips are fain to go.*

DENIS TURNER.

Riding the Rods

Rail Ways of the Hobo

BERNARD J. FARMER

'HOBBO' is, of course, the transatlantic term for a tramp; and in particular it means a special sort of tramp who rides free on the railroad systems of the United States and Canada. He roams for the love of roaming—as I did when I was in Canada, from 1920 to 1927, and again from 1934 to 1938. I don't mean that I never did any work. I did; and there I differed from the dyed-in-the-wool hobo who will never settle down till the time comes for him to have his boots off. But I travelled plenty, as they say, and usually on the railroad track, bumming a free ride whenever I could.

How is it done? Those who live in a small closely-packed country like Britain, where railways are fenced in, can hardly understand how open the tracks are in Canada. The railroad is the mother and father of settlers. The most respectable persons walk along the track where there is no road—the Trans-Canada Highway wasn't completed, I think, until 1940. Naturally, when convenient, they ride, paying for a ticket. The hobo always rides, and he doesn't pay for a ticket.

The usual technique is to wait about half-a-mile out of town, preferably for a freight-train, the rate of acceleration being slower. Along she comes, drawing perhaps a mile-long train of assorted cars—box, refrigerator, and flats. Then you make your selection.

THE most comfortable ride is in an empty box-car. You can lie like a king on some straw in the corner and, through the open sliding-doors, watch the scenery go by. Unfortunately, this is just the place where the train crew are likely to look, and if a brakie—that is to say, a brakesman—finds you, off you go, even though the train is moving at a

fair bat, unless, of course, he happens to be a kindhearted fellow who will turn the blind eye.

I have had many adventures with brakies. Some used to carry revolvers; and when you saw a brakie's hand stealing to the region of his hip-pocket, then was the time to think fast. You could jump, and risk a nasty fall on the roadbed. You could talk—quite the best bet. The most accomplished hoboes are grand talkers. A brakie leads a somewhat boring life on his vast journeys, and if you could get him interested, then maybe he would allow you a safe passage.

I was travelling once from Winnipeg to Toronto. All seemed well. The rain was pelting down, and from my snug box-car I lay and watched it. Then there was a scraping noise outside and a brakie climbed along and looked in. For a moment we stared eye to eye, then he shouted: 'Jump, hobo.'

'Wait a minute,' I said. 'I'm an ice-hockey player, and I want to get to Toronto to play in a game.'

'A likely story,' he jeered. 'Just look at you. Where's all the dollars you make?'

'I lost them at poker,' I answered.

Well, to cut the story short, we fraternised; and for the rest of the journey I rode in the caboose, the guard's-van, that is, with the crew. 'You dreadful liar!' I can hear the reader say, 'you never played ice-hockey in your life.' That is true; but I brought some romance into the train crew's lives, and, mark you, I had my principles. When the crew got up a collection for me and tried to make me accept it, I refused. 'Back the Tigers with the money, boys,' I told them. This they agreed to do—and later I heard that the Tigers won. So did a good deed bring its reward.

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On another occasion, when I tried to talk my way out of a jam, I wasn't so lucky. The scene was another empty box-car, with me inside and another brakie on the prowl. This brakie carried a coupling-pin—a very nasty weapon. 'Jump, hobo,' the fellow commanded.

The train was on a down-grade and doing about thirty-five miles an hour. 'I'll maybe break a leg if I do,' I said.

'Yeah. Jump!' he repeated. He began to manoeuvre me backwards towards the open door.

Hastily I started my line of spiel. 'I'm an ice-hockey player, and I want to get to—'

'Ice-hockey players are punk,' he interrupted. 'So is the game'—from which I concluded that he had lost money on his bets, for most Canadians regard ice-hockey with the reverence Englishmen accord to cricket; and my tale wasn't really so fantastic, for many young men try by every means possible to get into the game and big money. But this brakie . . . He raised his weapon menacingly. 'Your last chance, hobo. Jump.'

I did the only thing possible. I jumped. The roadbed hit me with a bang I remember still, and I thought I would never stop rolling.

'Don't you bum no more free rides!' bawled the brakie after me.

But I did. I have read that airmen after a crash will take to the air again as soon as possible. So, limping and bleeding, I boarded the very next freight. Even hoboes have their pride.

FAILING an empty box-car, you must select some other means of transportation. 'Riding the blind' means riding behind the steel end of a car or behind the tender of the locomotive. It needs considerable agility to get on the buffer-beam of a car while the train is moving, and, once you are on, you have to cling to the vertical steel ladder provided for the use of the train crew.

Hanging on to the ladder for five minutes doesn't seem much, but when you hang on for two or three hours you begin to know it. And if you do it in winter—the cold Canadian winter when the thermometer goes down below zero—you are likely to have your hands frozen to the icy iron. I have been so stiff riding by this means that when the time came to jump off I couldn't jump—I fell; and it

was only by good luck that I didn't fall under following wheels. Many a hobo has lost a leg or a foot.

One could, of course, climb up the ladder on to the top of the box-car. There is a cat-walk along the top of the huge cars, and one could lie there spread-eagled—in full view, however, of the caboose at the end of the train; at least, the crew look from time to time along the enormous length of cars to see that all is well, and a hobo in full view would be a direct challenge. A brakie once caught me sunning myself like a lizard one beautiful summer's day. 'I don't mind a free ride, brother,' he said, 'but you want to make a meal of it. Scram outer sight.' And, naturally, I hastened to be more tactful!

YET another method was to 'ride the rods,' and this required considerable nerve, for you seemed to be rushed along much faster than you really were. The rods are tie-rods underneath the cars. They are tensioned in the usual way, and run together in pairs. The hobo lies full-length on one of the pairs, his body pressed between them, and only a few feet above the track. He is safe from human interference here—for who is going to climb under the cars to find him? But loose roadbed ballast may scarify his face; and if he rolls off—well, he is under the wheels.

Yet I have climbed the Rockies by this means. And I chose well, for the heavy train, treble-headed up the hundreds of miles of steady gradient, moved so slowly for most of the way that I could travel quite comfortably, and, by turning my head, view the magnificent scenery—the vast mountains piling up one behind the other, the beautiful lakes, like Emerald Lake, shimmering green in the sun; and several times I saw a brown-bear rooting for tasty morsels.

Part of the journey the other pair of rods was occupied by an embryo Bachelor of Science, a young fellow working his way through college in the familiar American manner. With the faraway snorting of the three locomotives as a background, we discussed all kinds of matters, including the food-bags we had brought with us. At division-points, where locomotives are changed, we had to bestir ourselves, get off, walk through the station, and wait for the train as it came along with fresh locos. In fact, the 'hobo's rush' at stations was a usual

sight. I have seen as many as sixty men roll off the train as she slowed down and tear along the track through the station, where there might or might not be a policeman waiting to receive them. If any were caught, well, it meant the 'cooler,' or jail, for the night; but a fast rate of progress when the law is behind is part of a hobo's stock-in-trade.

My scientific friend, Micky, called this seeing life; and with American seriousness he thought it was his duty to do so. He had his wish fully gratified, for, jumping an empty box-car as we neared Vancouver, we found inside five men. One of them proved to be a murderer. In his sleep the man talked. How he talked! He made strangling motions with his hands, and when he woke he let out a dreadful yell. 'I thought I saw a rope,' he told us.

We stared at him, all of us silent. Six judges. I suppose you wouldn't call us saints, but there is something about a murderer . . .

'I never meant to do it,' he declared. We were still silent. The man was panting and sweating. 'She shouldn't have talked back at me,' he ran on. 'I got to get my mind off it. Have a hand of cards with me, boys.'

'I don't play cards,' I replied.

'Nor me,' said Micky.

The other four shook their heads.

'I know, boys, I know,' cried the murderer, 'you won't play with me. I shall never sleep again. God have mercy on me!'

'Look, bud,' said the eldest hobo present, 'what you've done ain't my business; but I know what I should do now if I was you.'

'What?'

The hobo jerked his thumb at the track. 'We're coming into —. There's a jail there and a police-station. Give yourself up, and then maybe you'll have some peace.'

'Yeah,' muttered the man, 'that's what I will do.'

And that is what he did—and I learned then that the real law is a man's conscience.

YOU may wonder what the locomotive crew thought about this make-free with railroad property; but the engineer, usually called the 'hogger,' and the fireman have never been enemies of the hobo—their business is with what lies ahead of them, not behind.

Once, when riding the blind behind the tender, I incautiously thrust up my head as the fireman was moving some coal. He stared at me. 'What the heck are you doing?'

'Riding to Winnipeg.'

'Work-shy, hey?'

'No,' I replied, 'I'm willing to work.'

'Then come and help me shift this coal.'

I climbed on top of the tender and began to shovel as he directed me. We were, I remember, gently down-grading towards Calgary. It was a glorious summer's morning. The scenery was like a picture postcard, and I was king of it—I and my mates the hogger and the fireman. They had a can of tea with them, and they shared it with me. And all the while the great loco, one of the biggest freight jobs on the road, moved softly downhill; and the engineer had leisure to talk to me. Was I English? Why had I come out to Canada? What were things like in the Old Country?

A red-letter day you will say; and better than riding the blind or the rods. By evening, it is true, I was riding the blind again, on another loco and with another crew. But I was well stoked-up inside—the result of a dollar given to me by the fireman for my work. I had no hesitation in taking it, for engineers and firemen are very well paid.

I have mentioned flat-cars, but from the hobo's point of view they are cars to steer clear of, because they generally carry a movable load; and, when the hogger smacks the brakes on, the load shifts forward and any hobo unfortunate enough to be riding with it might be crushed to a pulp.

The ending of a hobo's life is sad—unless he gives up in time and finds a haven somewhere. In old age he isn't agile enough to jump, and a misstep may mean a fearful death. He hasn't the strength to hang on hour after hour. And perhaps he dies with his boots on—flung off when the train is batting at forty miles an hour.

But in the heyday of his strength, what better life? The roar of the wheels, the exhilaration of speed, the low melancholy note of the loco whistling for a level-crossing, and at night the white glare of the headlight lighting the track for half-a-mile ahead. These things the hobo never forgets; they get into his blood. A man will be in Montreal one week—in New York or Winnipeg the next. Why? The eternal hobo answers: 'I t because I want to, brother.'

The Talking Tree

J. A. MacDONALD

AT the sound of hoofs I turned from contemplating the water under the bridge and looked up the glen road. A handsome Shelt pony drawing a flat, two-wheeled lorry was on its way down, and over the Shelt's broad haunch was visible an old, walnut face surmounted by a tatterdemalion Morayshire hat. 'Twas the face of Jacob Eneas Macphee, Prince of Tinkers, Uncle Jake to you, an you ask permission.

If you are familiar with a two-wheeled tinker's lorry you will recognise one instantly, carrying its shapeless load of beggars' trousseaux, tin cans, and tittle-tattle, as a tipsy man's hat will carry a gallon of beer—in spill-about fashion. 'Tis a mystery to me how tinker, paraphernalia, lorry, and all remain cohesive behind a mettlesome Shelt, but so they do. And over the top of this rollicking equipage, away off where the ribbon road narrowed to less than a steel pin, rose the blue mountains and the cumulous sky.

'*Ciad mile fáilte a' charaid,*' Uncle Jake greeted me graciously. 'Climb up here on the boat-deck and let me see the colour of your eyes. Hmph! Will we be putting a bit of a glint into them now with a glass of something, or would you prefer to remain in poetical meditation with running water?'

'The something has it, just man,' answered I. 'And the river will be here when I come back, so where's the loss?'

'Up with you, then,' cried Uncle Jake, keeping a tight rein on the prancing pony. 'Up with you quick, or else this devil's off-spring will have us over the parapet amongst the wee fishes.'

Up I got, and off we went at a good clip into the village. Who has not seen the village of Croily on a summer's day has missed as much pleasure as he could comfortably carry on his back for a lifetime. There is a store

of trees about Croily where it stands on the strand of the river of that name, and every tree shadows a spell. They are the spells of old story and of old glory; of pastoral peace with maybe a wee bit of a fight now and again just to flavour it; of sweet romance with a few boredom-relieving tears. Furthermore, Croily is the largest town between the Stack Mountains and New York—which is a spellbinding thing itself.

'Trees,' said Uncle Jake meditatively, 'trees galore. I can never make out if the trees are built between the houses or the houses grow among the trees. Ubh, ubh, you could pluck an acorn from any house in Croily without putting more than your head and shoulders out of a bedroom window.'

'You mean you could pick an acorn from any tree in Croily,' I corrected him.

'Maybe, maybe,' returned Uncle Jake impatiently. 'Tis mixed up between the trees and houses I am—no new thing for me. I remember getting the same mixing-up before at a place in the east counties some fifteen years ago. I was treed up there one time with a rope-ladder, and a cold stomach, and divil the little else.—But stop you now,' he continued, pulling up the Shelt. 'Yonder the pub. Go and collaborate with the owner for the price of two glasses of ale, and fetch them out here. I have a mind to sit in the fresh air and act the part of a strolling minstrel. 'Tis no bad place this for recounting the adventure of the talking tree. The trees hereabouts will be grateful for a story about their kind, and I daresay you will be silent in the presence of mystery and beer.' When the beer was to hand, Uncle Jake took up his tale.

IT was at a place in the east counties that this adventure befell me. I disremember

THE TALKING TREE

the name of the place, but no matter. There was a hole in the sack of seedlings that the Almighty's Flora Distributor was carrying when he tree-populated this island, and a big lot of seeds fell on this village by mistake before the A.F.D. found the leakage. I never saw such a place of trees and dogs. It was paradise for both. And I never saw so many hearts with arrows through them and names inscribed alongside in any other square mile of forest. There were so many of those abiding symbols of lovers' art, I was afraid for the continuance of the penknife industry of the nation, which fear led me to the man who sold those tools of the Lovers' Tree Carving Association—Peter Matheson, I shall call him, who kept the ironmonger's shop in the village.

He was a man making a roaring trade out of romance and penknives, yet his own experience of these commodities was driving him to distraction and sleepless nights. It often happens that the heart dispensing romance is itself without comfort—take the case of a minister officiating at the marriage ceremony. It was common knowledge that the girl Peter Matheson wanted to marry, and forever cherish, had forsaken him. Another man had taken his place at one end of the base of the eternal triangle, and now it was more isosceles than equilateral, with Peter's position crawling further away from the others' every day. I know how it feels to be at the wrong apex of a romantic triangle. I had the same experience myself once with a girl from Portsoy and a net-manufacturer's salesman, so I could sympathise with Peter Matheson in his heartaches.

Rosie Macrae was a pretty slip of a girl, though nothing to rave about—but then I was never in love with her myself. To Peter, Rosie Macrae had a beauty beyond belief. She had a skin on her the like of which the sun itself would take shame to touch because of the softness it had, and her two breasts were as high and as white as summer clouds. All day long she would be plucking sweet music from the harp of her throat, and her hair was so long and luxuriant it could take the place of the mat beneath her feet. Of course, this was all lover's licence and the poet Ossian, but I listened to it and never let on I disagreed. Rosie Macrae's chief attraction in my eyes was her being the daughter of the local publican.

Now the ironmonger's shop in this village

was right next to the pub, and what with Peter living in rooms over the shop, he was always seeing Rosie—a splendid arrangement before the rift, but now agony unspeakable. I am quoting Peter. The gardens behind the shop and the pub adjoined, and even shared branches of the inevitable trees—which brings me to the talking tree and my ruse to reconstitute Peter and Rosie one with the other.

WHILE stravaiging round after dark, I found out that Rosie and her new swain were in the habit of breathing sweet good-nights at her garden-gate in the lane, only a few feet away from poor Peter's gate. Growing close to the wall between the two gates was a noble tree, with spreading branches and a profusion of leaves. The first branch was about ten feet off the ground. Here was an ideal place for eavesdropping on the two and maybe finding out how their romance was progressing. 'Twas not a nice thing to be doing, you will say, but all's fair in love and war. I would need a rope-ladder to be mobile and secret, so, with a length of rope, a sharp knife, and a day in the woods, I made one.

I don't remember being very friendly with that tree. At my first cast it flung the rope-ladder back in my eye and nearly stopped the adventure before it had properly started. But I had the branch hooked at the fifth cast and went up the ladder hand over fist. Man, have you noticed how slender the branch of a tree looks on closer inspection up there? This one reminded me of a steel girder when viewed from the ground, but when I was face down on it, I could see right through it. I felt just like a chicken mesmerised by a chalk-line.

In search of a comfortable place to roost, this chicken climbed higher, with the rolled ladder under its coat. A crook within a bower of leaves would do nicely, so I settled down to wait with aching back against the bole of the tree and feet dangling. All I could hear then was the leaves whispering to one another and the sad sighing of the wind. My heart, 'twas a night for love, with a pale moon struggling through clouds and the air as balmy as a suggestion of Chanel No. 5. And me treed like a capercaillie with never a female by. Wheest! Was it ten minutes had passed or sixty and myself in a dream when I heard the sound of voices? There was a

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boy and a girl, perjink as you like, mooning beneath my tree.

'Listen, Rosie,' said a man's voice persuasively. 'What more can I do for you now, and me going far across the sea to Canada this day week?'

'Marry me,' said Rosie.

'Marry you?' said the man, surprised. 'And who's to know what might happen to me in that far land, to be drowned at sea or trampled to death by buffaloes, and you left here a widow?'

'Take me with you, then,' said Rosie.

'And who's to pay your fare, darlin'—the birds of the air? I'll promise nothing till I hope to fulfil my vow. And maybe you'll grow tired of the thought of me away there with the seas between us, and your kisses cold on your lips, and another man in your eyes.'

'Another man?' said Rosie, surprised in her turn. 'And me eating my heart out for you early and late.'

'Another man,' says he, standing there dragging her sweetest secrets from a girl and nothing in his mind but the thought of forsaking her. And she burst into tears.

'Peter,' said I to myself up in my tree, 'it's finished you are, and this girl climbing over herself to get at this man. 'Tis a black crime and a waste of time sitting here listening to the lovers.' But I stayed where I was for obvious reasons.

Well, the pair of them had a proper set-to at the finish, and Rosie ran into the house crying like a waterfall, and the man went away. 'Here's where Jacob Eneas Macphee beats a hasty retreat,' said I to myself—but no. The light went up in Rosie's bedroom and I saw her from my eyrie still sobbing her heart out and beating her little feet against the counterpane of her bed. What man is worth that? But a woman will have her own way if it chokes her.

I WAS preparing to climb down and go home to my tent when another interruption occurred. What was this but Peter Matheson come out into his garden for a breath of fresh air the fine night that was in it, and maybe to take a wee look at Rosie Macrae's window while he was about it. 'Man,' I shouted before I could stop myself, 'you're a great fool this night being on the wrong side of that thin bit of glass up there. And you'll stay

on the wrong side of it as long as you have no more brains in your head than a speckled hen.'

'My God!' cried Peter, 'what was you?'

'Tis a tree,' said I, 'speaking to you, and not before time either. Do you think I could stand here day and night and not know what's going forward? I've seen you glowering and grinding at yon window night after night and never a thing done about it. Ach, 'tis a waste of time, for the girl is after a man, and you are no better than one of your own penknives half-shut.'

'I'll show you who's a man,' screamed Peter in a rage, and he was through the garden-gate and standing under my tree before I could take another breath to reply. 'You up there,' he called, 'I see you, you rascal.'

But I knew he couldn't see me at all, there were too many leaves in the way. 'Tis a tree talking,' said I then, in a voice approximate to a tree's. 'You're a fine one not knowing that a tree could speak and it a thousand years old. Have you never listened to the voice of the forest before?'

'You're a man what there is of you,' replied Peter, 'and a thief, and a robber, and other things besides. I'll not tell them all now. Come down out of that.'

'I'm your friend,' said I, 'and Rosie Macrae's friend too, and if you could see what I'm seeing now through her window you would kick yourself for a small sheepskin Romeo.'

'What can you see?' asked Peter, his curiosity overcoming his wrath.

'What can I see?' asked I in mock surprise. 'What but an elegant dressing-table, and a high wardrobe, and salmon-pink wallpaper, and a little red bed with a girl on it, crying her eyes out.'

'The ladder!' shouted Peter at that. 'Stop you now and I'll catch you yet.' And off he ran like a hare to the toolshed at the other end of the garden.

Well, I wasted no time after that, me boyo. I went down the tree and the ladder like a flash of summer lightning, and 'twas only when I was standing on terra firma once more that I found out I had no way of unhooking the rope-ladder. I had to leave it behind. I could hear Peter panting along with his wooden ladder and I had no wish to continue our argument on level terms. But I didn't run far. I hid behind another tree and watched to see what Peter would do next.

When he saw my rope-ladder dangling, he threw his own ladder down, and presently I heard him crashing about in the tree searching for me. Then he quietened down, and I knew he was looking at Rosie Macrae's bedroom. He must have stayed up there for ten minutes, just looking. Then I heard him coming down and made off.

When I ventured into the ironmonger's shop a week later, Peter was all smiles. As far as I know, to this day he never connected me with the voice in the tree, and I was saying nothing. I remember him absent-mindedly passing me a chromium-plated penknife, with reversible bottle-opener, and advising me to get married at once. Then he handed me out a harangue about life and love that set me to toying with the blade of the knife, and I left him to it. And who should I meet coming in at the door but sweet Rosie Macrae. Peter must have borrowed a wolf's skin from somewhere after all.

SO ended Uncle Jake Macphee's story about the talking tree, but alas, much as I hate to bring it up, there is a sequel to it.

There was a gale came from the sea the following March, such as the inhabitants of Croily had never seen before, and it played

havoc with their trees. A tree was blown down in the lane behind the pub and I went along there to view the damage. Ochone, but that tree was done with life! It was lying flat on the remains of a wall, and in falling it had broken three windows of the ironmonger's house, which is right next door to the pub.

Tree—ironmonger's house—pub? Something stirred in my memory eight months old. But it was the initials cut in the bole of the felled tree which interested me most. They were 'R. M.' and 'P. M.', inside a crude heart with the usual arrow through it. And as I was examining the marks, Patrick Munro, the ironmonger, who was also a bachelor, came out of his toolshed with a saw in his hand. He made a cut with the saw on either side of the marks and fell to work. I watched him thoughtfully for a moment, and then went straight round to the front of the pub. The old publican was sitting on the bench outside as I had expected. 'How is your daughter Ruby, Mr Murray?' I asked politely.

'She is fine, Ian, just fine,' he answered. 'Going to have her fifth soon. Sure, the Canadians will be the finest race on earth if she keeps this up.'

Now I ask myself—who is inventing tales, Uncle Jake or I?

A Starling Sings

*Oh, sheeny clown, why will you seek to vie
With philomel and that immortal bird
That, soaring, lost in th' ethereal sky,
The soul of Shelley stirred?*

*I mark with mirth your agitated wings,
Your ruffled throat pour out discordant sound.
Yet, well know I the heart that intly sings,
Unwilling to be bound.*

*Oh, would we two were given chords that break
As simply into music as soft air
In aspen murmurs, but the oaks forsake—
Singing, half-unaware.*

*Yet, may our song enchant its author's ear,
Nor faint for lack of the just instrument:
You, to yourself, shall carol sweet and clear,
Whilst with my muse shall I be found content.*

EDMUND LOCKHART REED.

The Father of Modern Detection

Dr Hans Gross and his Work

JUSTIN ATHOLL

CRIME and detection has a tremendous hold on the reading public all over the world, and there are millions who read almost every book, fact or fiction, dealing with the subject. Yet it is safe to say that not one in a thousand has ever read the greatest detective book ever written, or heard of its author, Dr Hans Gross. Dr Gross published his *Handbuch für Untersuchungsrichter als System der Kriminalistik* fifty-seven years ago, yet it remains the bible of the detectives of the world, and in his preface to the latest edition of the English adaptation, published in January of this year, Ronald Martin Howe, Assistant Commissioner of the C.I.D. at New Scotland Yard, says: 'Never for a moment, in our training courses and in the directions we give in individual cases, do we forget the cardinal principles laid down by Dr Gross.'

DR GROSS was a professor at the University of Prague and also lectured on criminology at the University of Vienna. He was not himself in the strict sense a detective, but he was constantly consulted, and in the course of time acquired an encyclopædic knowledge of crime and criminals. The first edition of *Criminal Investigation*, the English version of Dr Gross's book, contained in 67 pages of a small-type appendix no fewer than 1242 references to authorities. It was not, however, his Teutonic industry that made Dr Gross the authority on detection. He was himself an unusually acute observer, something of a psychologist, with a keen understanding of human motives and behaviour, and, above all, a scientist, which made it possible for him to construct the first scientific system of detection.

But something more even than this is

required to explain why Dr Gross's book has survived all the great technical advances of the last fifty years. It is probably his own complete absorption in his subject. Amongst the many qualities that Dr Gross demands of his detective, or 'investigator' as he calls him, is powerful interest in his work. Without that he 'would do well to seek without delay another sphere of employment.' Nobody in real life becomes a detective with the idea of earning a living. As Mr Howe says: 'Criminal investigation is a labour of love, and at our Detective Training School, in the early stages of their career, I always tell the students that in the C.I.D. they will never earn honestly more than a bare living. What we can offer is a life full of interest by day and night, and I sometimes quote a former French police chief who said: "The art of the detective is of all professions that which exacts the greatest intellectual and physical activity, and I feel sure that if I had to start life again, recalling what I know to-day, I should choose the same profession as that I now pursue. And yet I have now forty-two years of service and sixty-four years of age."'

Since Dr Gross compiled his system of criminal investigation there have been rapid strides in the application of science to detection, but such is the reputation of his book that the world's leading experts in various branches of scientific detection have gladly written special sections for the work or collaborated in bringing Dr Gross's remarks up to date. The additions and changes in the course of years have been extensive, yet not nearly so extensive as might be thought, for, as has been pointed out by a leading authority, Dr Gross was many years ahead of his time.

One of Dr Gross's main points was to

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emphasise the great contribution that scientific experts of every kind could make to detection. Dr Gross's system is the exact opposite of that of Sherlock Holmes, who would come upon one clue and then deduce a mountain of information about it. The investigator, said Dr Gross, must see everything, question everyone, pick up the smallest material clue, however useless it may seem, and then turn to the specialist for information about it. But unless the investigator is himself aware of what science can do he may miss the bits of evidence—hairs, particles of dust, microscopic fragments of metal—that the specialist could interpret, or, worse still, the investigator may destroy them by accident or clumsiness.

WHAT makes Dr Gross so fascinating to the lay reader who may happen to come across him is his ability to quote examples to illustrate every point. For instance, he points out the danger of the 'clue' accidentally imported to the scene of the crime, and illustrates it with the case of the maidservant charged with the theft of a pile of 1000 florin-notes from her mistress. The maid's room was searched, her trunk taken to the police-station. Nothing incriminating was found until the investigator leaped on a small strip of paper marked '1000 florins in 1 florin notes.' It was the habit of the bank to roll up sums of money in such strips for convenience in paying out. How to prove that this strip had held the missing notes?

Closer investigation showed in faint pencil the date, August 22nd, written by the cashier at the bank. But the theft had taken place before August 22nd. This seemed to suggest that the strip of paper had not encircled the notes. And so in the end it proved. One of the clerks had brought the investigator his salary to his room. In putting it away, the encircling band had fallen from a pile of notes unnoticed. When the contents of the trunk were later spread out, it was naturally concluded the strip of paper had come from the trunk. 'But suppose,' says Dr Gross, 'that by some chance the date on the strip had been but a few days earlier, a perfectly innocent person might have been convicted simply because an object that had nothing to do with the case had not been eliminated.'

To illustrate his warning that the evidence

of witnesses of events of violence or excitement cannot be relied upon even for major happenings, much less for details, Dr Gross goes back to the execution of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. There are numerous contemporary descriptions of the execution by eye-witnesses, many of them distinguished by 'abundance of great detail.' Yet not one of them mentions a striking fact that was discovered when the coffin was opened in the thirties of the last century. It required two strokes of the axe to sever the queen's head. 'All the spectators were evidently in such a state of agitation that not even one of them observed the false blow and would, if questioned in a court of law, have probably sworn that only one blow was dealt.'

How readily the mind jumps to conclusions is shown by the case of the warder who saw a convict approaching and thought he was about to be attacked. The warder swore the convict carried in his hand a knife—and believed it. The convict actually was carrying a bloater for his tea! The mind orders the eye to see what it wants it to see.

Dr Gross was the first to put forward a whole series of maxims, some of which are now familiar to every reader of detective novels. For instance: 'Never alter the position of, pick up, or even touch any object before it has been minutely described in the report and a photograph taken of the scene.' But he also has all sorts of maxims, bits of information, and tips which are not so well known. For example, professional and amateur criminals use disguise in exactly opposite ways. The professional disguises himself to commit the crime, and then abandons his disguise. The amateur commits the crime without disguise, but then adopts disguise to avoid being recognised.

On the subject of firearms he writes: 'It is a common fallacy to suppose that accurate shooting is easier with an automatic pistol than a revolver . . . quick shooting with the average automatic is far harder than quick shooting with the average revolver.'

Regarding footprints, Dr Gross states that the distance apart of footprints diminishes with age. A man of forty takes a pace of almost exactly 30 inches, but a man of thirty takes a pace of 32-33 inches. The footsteps of a man walking backwards can be distinguished because the pace is shorter, the muscles not being accustomed to this form of locomotion. A man may put on a woman's

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shoes, or a woman a man's, with the object of deceiving, and such deceptions have worked perfectly on occasions. Generally, however, the criminal forgets that 'big feet have long legs and vice versa.' The criminal trying to produce 'simulated' footsteps usually makes the mistake of impressing them too well, in order to make sure they are observed. Careful examination shows they are unnatural.

THERE is in Dr Gross's book a section on every type of crime from pickpocketing to faking antiques, and every one contains acute observations and curious facts. For instance, nearly all pickpockets have first and middle fingers of almost the same length. This physical formation is essential to the successful 'scissors movement' with which a pickpocket withdraws objects from a pocket, and the appearance of a man's hands is a 'signal' to the detective on the lookout for pickpockets.

Gross found the fabrication of antiques the most interesting of frauds, and quotes astonishing cases, like that of the Dresden doctor who produced the mummy of Queen Nitocris out of the corpse of a beautiful young girl and sold it for its weight in gold. He does not claim any credit for the detection of this fraud. It gave itself away when the 'mummy' began to exude a strange odour.

Under photography is listed the strange story of the assassination of President McKinley in the U.S.A., a moving-picture record of a crime such as a detective cannot hope to get once in a million cases. The pictures show President McKinley delivering his address and shaking hands with people right up to the moment when the bullet struck him. 'A man is seen making his way with difficulty through the crowd. Various people whom he pushes recklessly aside turn on him with angry looks. Unperturbed he forges his way ahead . . . then he stands still for a second and turns his face unsuspectingly towards the camera. Desperate resolution can be seen in his eyes. Then he goes further, pushing until he is immediately before the President. Again he faces the camera. Now his hat is knocked over his eyes and hastily he puts it back. He then looks wildly round and appears as if waiting for a signal. Thou-

sands of people are in the picture with him, but most of them stand with their back to the camera. The features of all who turned round are clear enough to make them recognisable in the photograph. From these films drawings were taken by the secret-service police, with the aim of discovering with their help some clue to the confederates of the murderer. . . .'

Compare this with the murder of President Carnot by the Italian Caserio, where not a single person saw the blow struck although the murderer had jumped on the foot-rest of the carriage, pushed aside Carnot's arm, and thrust the dagger in his abdomen. Three men were in the carriage, two grooms were standing behind, and mounted officers were on either side. Yet no one saw the President stabbed, and the murderer might have escaped if he had not shouted '*Vive l'anarchie*' as he ran away. Gross quotes this as showing how little witnesses may notice. He adds another grim example. After a certain execution which he attended, he asked officials present the colour of the executioner's gloves. Three replied black, grey, and white respectively, while the fourth swore he wore no gloves at all. Still, all these four witnesses had been within a yard or two of the executioner.

DETECTIVE-STORY writers have found

Dr Gross's great work a mine of inspiration as well as of information. Any avid reader of detective yarns would recognise here the germs of plots of famous detective mysteries, such as Edgar Wallace's *The Clue of the New Pin*. There remain a hundred stories to be written from cases described in detail or mentioned in passing—'The Clue of the Fowl's Gizzard,' 'The Case of the Missing Tomatoes,' 'The Criminal Who Collected Cuttings.' Dr Gross was a contemporary of Sherlock Holmes, but his method and outlook was completely different. The only references to drugs are concerned with collecting pathological specimens, and to violins in connection with faking Strads. But Dr Gross does recommend cigarettes as part of the equipment of the perfect detective—they are useful for promoting friendliness, and essential, he says, if the detective has to attend a post-mortem!

Fruit-Tree Spraying

WHAT a privilege it would be to be able to ensure that this article on winter spraying was put into the home of every man and woman keen on gardening. It is so disappointing to have to deal with queries in the spring and summer which show that the writer has no idea that the control of the majority of the commoner pests of fruit-trees and fruit-bushes can be carried out during the winter. It is far easier to smother the egg and kill it than to try to control a moving insect four or five months later on.

Take, for example, the aphides, which cause the leaves of red- and black-currents to pucker and curl up and to turn a reddish colour. These sucking creatures can not only prevent the foliage from functioning properly, and that affects the crop this year, and next year as well, but in addition, in bad cases, the fruit may be damaged and made unpleasant because of the secretion of the aphides, and the new wood is often deformed. Think also of the plum or damson. I know instances where trees are never sprayed with the right type of wash in the winter and, as a result, the mealy aphid and the leaf-curling kind do a tremendous amount of harm. Apart from damaging the leaves by sucking them, these pests reduce the vigour of the trees so much that they fail to crop the following season also. In many districts damsons never crop year after year entirely owing to aphid attack.

What has been said of currants and plums might equally well be said of apples, and, in fact, here there's always the question of the pest known as the apple-sucker, which attacks the opening flowers and destroys them. This trouble has sometimes been erroneously described as frost damage, and the writer has known of trees that have refused to bear for fourteen years cropping the following season when sprayed by a good tar-oil wash in the winter. Winter spraying should, therefore, be looked upon as a routine measure every December or January, and preferably December. It is so easy to put off winter washing, but there is little doubt there's often better spraying weather in December than in January.

It isn't only a question of killing the insect eggs. A good miscible tar-oil wash will clean the trunks and branches and make short work of the mosses and lichen. Further, much of the loose bark will be removed, and thus there will be fewer hiding-places for insect eggs. Where trees have not been sprayed in the past, and so are old and neglected, it is advisable to use a 10 per cent solution—that is 1 pint of tar-oil in 9 pints of water, but with soft-fruit, and where trees have been regularly winter washed, a 5 per cent solution is enough—1 pint of miscible tar-oil in 19 of water.

The special spraying tar-oil is black in colour when bought, but turns pure white when mixed with water. This colour is useful because it enables the grower to see where the spray has reached and to make certain therefore that the whole of the tree or bush is covered. As the wash soaks into the bark, the white colour naturally disappears. May I emphasise the importance of not missing any part of a tree or bush. The sprayer cannot tell where the eggs are laid, and this means that he must soak the twigs as well as the trunk. Treat all fruits, with the exception of strawberries, nuts, and filberts, and it is quite a good plan to give the roses a spraying with a 5 per cent solution at the same time.

The wash should always be applied with as much force as possible, so that it gets into all the nooks and crannies. It should be put on during a fine still day, because, if it should rain soon afterwards, much of the benefit of the tar-oil application may be lost. Few people realise the importance of the soaking, and as an example I would say that a ten- or twelve-year-old apple-tree which has grown well will easily take 4 or 5 gallons of diluted tar-oil wash to ensure that it is thoroughly drenched from top to toe. Go to a reliable firm, buy an efficient wash, and be prepared to do the job properly.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

Science at Your Service

ALUMINIUM IN BUILDING

METALS used for flashings, weatherings, and gutter-linings in building construction must possess good durability and at the same time must be soft or ductile. Lead was traditionally used, but its price to-day is somewhat formidable; indeed, when old roofs are rebuilt the scrap price obtained for the lead removed is often a pleasant surprise to the owner. Other metals which have been employed are zinc and copper, both of which are ductile enough for working. In the drive for reduced building costs, aluminium is now making some advance into this specialised use of metal. The lightness of aluminium is a particular asset; its durability under exposure to all weathers is excellent. Aluminium, however, as most of us know it, is not ductile; it is much less workable than lead, and a good deal less so than zinc or copper. Modern research has overcome this difficulty. While ordinary or 'commercial purity' aluminium is not very ductile, what is known as 'super purity' aluminium—that is, 99.99 per cent pure aluminium—is very ductile. Produced for special needs of the Services during the war, this very pure aluminium has only recently become freely available. For roofing work, it is cheaper than both copper and zinc and only one-third of the cost of the generally used lead. Also, equivalent amounts required weigh about one-third as much as those of copper and zinc and one-quarter that of lead.

A LIGHTWEIGHT ACCUMULATOR

By using specially-prepared silver and zinc electrodes and alkali instead of acid, a British firm has been able to manufacture accumulators which are half the size of and about a quarter of the weight of standard acid accumulators of similar capacity. Size and weight reductions are not the only advantages. Fire risk is lessened, as there is very little generation of hydrogen-gas. The liquid used as an electrolyte—a purified caustic-potash solution—is mainly absorbed in the electrodes and in their semi-permeable encasements; there is less risk of liquid spilling than with

acid-type accumulators. Normal charging methods are applied, but it has always been a feature of the alkaline type of accumulator that heavy rates of charging and discharging are not detrimental. The case is made of perspex, and the vent and filler-plug of polythene. At present, twenty-eight types of these new accumulators are manufactured, and a further range of types suitable for wireless-set operation is soon to be introduced. Voltages of the types now available are from 1.5 to 12, with capacities of from 0.5 to 40 ampere-hours. The smallest model weighs only $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. when filled and charged; the largest weighs 13 lb. 12 oz. A 10-amp. 3-volt model weighs 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

MODERN SECATEURS

There is nothing fundamentally new in the modern secateur for clipping hard shoots and twigs and pruning bushes and trees. For close work, keen blades and a strong but easy cutting-action are required; for distant work, long handles, provided in extreme cases with lever-control, are necessary. These basic principles have remained unchanged for many years. One tool-manufacturing company has made a long and intensive study of garden secateurs and produces a varied range of models. For example, it was found that one very common cause of damage was the use of secateurs for wire-cutting; now one of these standard models has a special wire-cutting section incorporated at the inside or anvil end of the blades. A frequent trouble with the long type of tree-pruning secateur is the catching of the leads from the hand-lever in twigs or lower branches. This company's models, either 3-feet or 6-feet long, have the leads enclosed within the tubular handle. In all models emphasis has been placed upon a clean, non-bruising cutting-action and upon sturdy design that will stand up to years of use without frequent repairs and adjustments. However, should one of these secateurs suffer damage, a wide range of replacement parts is available so that the purchase of completely new secateurs may not be necessary.

SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

AN EGG-CLEANING MACHINE

The mechanisation of egg-cleaning in the poultry industry is not new. A British machine has been on the market since 1933. In recent years, however, a number of improvements have been embodied in its design and it is capable of cleaning eggs at the rate of 300 in fifteen minutes. Medium-sized or large poultry-farms can save a great deal of labour by introducing one of these appliances. Egg-cleaning is more and more essential as packing-stations penalise the suppliers of dirty eggs by paying 1d. less per egg. With egg-rationing no longer operative during the peak-production season, an increased insistence upon clean-shelled eggs is, without doubt, inevitable.

The principle of this machine is very simple. Each egg passes along and between two revolving rubber-covered conveyors. A water-conveying brush wets each egg at the start of its journey and during the rest of its passage along the conveyors the egg is steadily cleaned by revolving bristle brushes. The tufted formation of the brushes ensures that the ends as well as the side surfaces of the eggs are cleaned. The whole of this 'circuit' is neatly enclosed in a cylindrical metal case, with an aperture for feeding eggs and a long inspection-window to check that cleaning is proceeding satisfactorily. The cleaned eggs run out on to a large wire drying-tray, whose angle of slope can be adjusted. Hand-operated or motorised models are available; also, models for table positioning and models which carry their own stand for floor placement. An impressive feature of the design is the ease with which all moving parts can be removed for periodic cleaning or adjustments.

A NEW TREATMENT FOR GASTRIC ULCERS

The prevalence of stomach or peptic ulcers in modern life is only too well known. In general, their treatment has involved either long rest and an irksome diet, or, in more severe cases, surgical intervention. Encouraging reports have come recently from American medical research about a new treatment employing a chemical substance named banthine. For the benefit of chemically-minded readers, this is a short and convenient name for a complex quaternary-ammonium organic compound. Doses are given orally, not by injection. Even long-standing ulcers have been relieved and healed in the clinical trials with banthine. The characteristic pain

of ulcers is quickly relieved; healing takes from three to eight weeks, after which the amounts of the regular doses of banthine are reduced. Out of 55 cases in which surgical treatment would normally have been necessary, 50 were cured by the banthine treatment alone. These early results, described by American medical workers as gratifying, are expected to be followed by a more general use of banthine by American doctors. British medical authorities are no doubt watching the developments closely. A cautious attitude to these initial claims is probable, however, following the complete failure of the much-publicised American antihistamine cure for colds when this type of drug was tested on a thousand people at the British centre for common-cold research.

A SOLID-FUEL COOK-AND-HEAT UNIT

The combined hot-water and cooking appliance operated by solid fuel is now a well-known form of cooker. Constant improvements are being made in design, and one famous stove company has recently introduced an effective and not expensive new model. It is based upon a new system of controlled oven-heating. An air-regulator above the cooker itself and the usual spinner-type regulator under the fire-bars are jointly used to control the air-supply to the fire. The air-regulator balances heat to the whole oven and also varies the supply of pre-heated air to the fire, while the spinner varies the heat-supply to the top of the oven, the water-boiling unit, and the boiling-panel on the stove top. There are no oven flues to clean, as the air-supply through the regulator is heated and passes down the outer side and along the oven bottom to the fire itself. Hot water is amply obtained from a 25-30 gallon circulating cylinder; however, this cooker can be supplied without a hot-water unit if this is not required.

The cooker is insulated to conserve heat. Its principal finish is in fawn mottled-enamel. It will burn any kind of solid fuel—coal, coke, or anthracite; continuous operation will consume from 1½ to 2 cwt. per week. The dimensions of the appliance are approximately 30 by 30 by 18½ inches (depth last), and the oven itself is 13½ inches wide, 14¾ inches high, and 15½ inches deep. Plate-rack, splash-plate, and chromium-plated towel-rail are additions which can be provided. The appliance has been tested and approved by the Ministry of Fuel and Power.

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

A WHEEL-DRIVEN HOE

Considerable attention has been given in the last few years to appliances which reduce the labour-effort in such gardening tasks as digging and hoeing. Conservative countrymen may argue that nothing can beat the simple spade, fork, and hoe. Whether these people are right is beside the point when we consider many gardens to-day. The central fact is that all too often a business or professional man wants to cultivate a plot of, say, half-an-acre, but cannot give sufficient time to it unless perhaps he abandons every other activity of leisure. There is, too, the case of the keen gardener who must reduce his physical efforts through age or illness.

A recently-invented wheel-driven hoe offers a wide range of time and effort economies in the garden. It is probably misleading that it has been called a hoe, for different attachments enable this appliance to be used for general cultivation work, light ploughing, ridging, and raking. Two models, single- and double-wheeled, are produced, giving working widths of about 12 inches and of 13 to 20 inches respectively. The larger model is designed for smallholdings and commercial gardens rather than for private garden use.

The smaller, garden model used as a hoe carries a pair of hoeing blades operating behind the wheel and attached to the one-piece tool-frame between the wheel and the handle. The hoeing blades can be readily detached and replaced by duck-feet cultivating blades, ploughs which will turn the soil to a depth of 4 to 5 inches, ridging ploughs, or rakes with three, five, or seven prongs. The weight of the single-wheel appliance is only 15 lb. Its length, including the wheel, is 5 feet, a measurement that indicates the extent to which back-bending may be minimised. Operated at walking-pace, this appliance, it is claimed, will do in one hour work that would require six-hours' effort with normal implements. Paint finish is in red and green, and the construction is strong. Light rustless metal-alloys have been used for the base-frame and wheel, while the various attachments are made of tempered steel.

A CARPET DYE FOR HOME USE

An entirely original idea in dyes has recently been introduced, a dye which is claimed to be applicable to carpets without removing them from their laid positions on the floor.

The dye is in a spirit solution and can be applied to the carpet with a stiff brush or spraying apparatus. One quart of the spirit dye will cover about 30 square feet, so that just under a gallon would be needed to treat a 12-by-9-foot carpet. A wide range of colours is available. The idea would seem to have attractive possibilities at a time when so many carpets are having to serve their basic floor-covering purpose long after their more ornamental virtues have faded away.

A NOVEL ELECTRIC-FIRE

The French system of room-heating, with its stove and flue placed centrally in the room, may be an awkward restriction upon furniture arrangement but it has the outstanding merit of heating all parts of the room-space equally. Although electric-fires are mobile and portable, their general design has not greatly encouraged their use in central positions. The heating elements of most fires radiate in one direction only and, as a result, most of these appliances are found in or near the hearth when used. But our fireplaces are set in walls only because this is the easiest and best position for chimney-flues, not because a position on the perimeter of a room is an ideal point from which to heat it.

A recent design in electric-fires seems to take full advantage of the mobility of this heating method. The fire is hexagonal in shape, with a vertical 500-watt element in each of the six sides; it thus radiates heat equally in all directions. The fire is made in copper, bronze, or stainless steel; it has a metal base extending 2½ inches out from the sides of the fire, is 21½ inches high and 14 inches wide at the top. The design is ornamental. The elements are set well into the fire and protected from accidental contacts.

TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.

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